

THE
THEATRE:
OR,
SELECT WORKS
OF THE
British Dramatic Poets.

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

To which are prefixed,
The LIVES of these celebrated WRITERS,
AND
STRICTURES on Most of the PLAYS.

VOLUME the TENTH.

CONTAINING
✓ THE MOURNING BRIDE. A TRAGEDY.
✓ GEORGE BARNWELL. A TRAGEDY.
✓ THE DOUBLE DEALER. A COMEDY.
✓ THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. A COMEDY.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by and for MARTIN & WOTHERSPOON.

M. DCC. LXVIII.

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 THE WORKS OF JOHN A. KENNEDY
 GEORGE KENNEDY, A. KENNEDY
 THE KENNEDY DEATH, A. KENNEDY
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Printed by J. G. & Co. 10, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.
 IN ONE VOLUME.

THE
PROLOGUE
MOURNING BRIDE.

A
TRAGEDY.

BY
WILLIAM CONGREVE.

—Neque enim lex æquior ulla,
Quàm necis artifices arte perire sua.

OVID. de Arte Am.

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Printed by J. Smith, in Strand, near St. Dunstons Church.
Over de the Am.



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PROLOGUE.

THE time has been when plays were not so plenty,
 And a less number new would well content ye.
 New plays did then like almanacs appear,
 And one was thought sufficient for a year;
 Tho' they are more like almanacs of late,
 For in one year I think they're out of date:
 Nor were they without reason join'd together,
 For just as one prognosticates the weather,
 How plentiful the crop, or scarce the grain,
 What peals of thunder, and what show'rs of rain,
 So t'other can foretell, by certain rules,
 What crops of coxcombs, or what floods of fools.
 In such like prophecies were poets skill'd,
 Which now they find in their own tribe fulfill'd;
 The dearth of wit they did so long presage,
 Is fallen on us, and almost flames the stage.
 Were you not griev'd as often as you saw
 Poor actors thrash such empty sheafs of straw?
 Toiling and lab'ring, at their lungs' expence,
 To start a jest, or force a little sense.
 Hard fate for us! still harder in th' event,
 Our Authors sin, but we alone repent.
 Still they proceed, and at our charge write worse,
 'Twere some awards if they could reimburse;
 But there's the devil, tho' their cause is lost,
 There's no recovering damages or cost.

Good wits, forgive this liberty we take,
 Since custom gives the losers leave to speak.
 But if provok'd, your dreadful wrath remains,
 Take your revenge upon the coming scenes;
 For that damn'd poet's spar'd who damns a brother,
 As one thief 'scapes that executes another.

Thus far alone does to the wits relate,
 But from the rest we hope a better fate.
 To please and move has been our Poet's theme,
 Art may direct, but Nature is his aim;
 And, Nature mis'd, in vain he boasts his art,
 For only Nature can affect the heart.
 Then freely judge the scenes that shall ensue,
 But, as with freedom, judge with candour too;
 He won'd not lose, thro' prejudice, his cause,
 Nor would obtain precariously applause;
 Impartial censure he requests from all,
 Prepar'd by just decrees to stand or fall.

T R O C U E

Dramatis Personæ.

MANUEL, the king of Granada.

GONSALEZ, his favourite.

GARCIA, son to Gonzalez.

PEREZ, captain of the guards.

ALONZO, an officer, creature to Gonzalez.

OSMYN, a noble prisoner.

HELI, a prisoner, his friend.

SELIM, an eunuch.

ALNERIA, the princess of Granada.

ZARA, a captive queen.

LEONORA, chief attendant on the princess.

Women, Eunuchs and Mutes attending Zara, Guards, &c.

SCENE, GRANADA.



THE MOURNING BRIDE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Room of state.

The curtain rising slowly to soft music, discovers ALMERIA in mourning, LEONORA waiting in mourning.

After the music ALMERIA rises from her chair, and comes forward.

ALMERIA.

MUSIC has charms to soothe a savage breast,
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.
I've read that things inanimate have mov'd,
And, as with living souls, have been inform'd
By magic numbers and persuasive sound.
What then am I? Am I more senseless grown
Than trees or flint? O force of constant woe!
'Tis not in harmony to calm my griefs.
Anselmo sleeps, and is at peace; last night
The silent tomb receiv'd the good old king;
He and his sorrows now are safely lodg'd
Within its cold but hospitable bosom.
Why am not I at peace?

Leon. Dear Madam, cease,
Or moderate your griefs: there is no cause—

Alm. No cause! Peace, peace; there is eternal cause,
And misery eternal will succeed.
Thou canst not tell—thou hast indeed no cause.

3 The MOURNING BRIDE. ACT II.

Leon. Believe me, Madam, I lament Anselmo,
And always did compassionate his fortune ;
Have often wept to see how cruelly
Your father kept in chains his fellow king :
And oft at night, when all have been retir'd,
Have stolen from bed, and to his prison crept,
Where, while his goaler slept, I thro' the grate
Have softly whisper'd, and enquir'd his health,
Sent in my sighs and pray'rs for his deliv'rance,
For sighs and pray'rs were all that I could offer.

Alm. Indeed thou hast a soft and gentle nature,
That thus couldst melt to see a stranger's wrongs.
O Leonora, hadst thou known Anselmo,
How wou'd thy heart have bled to see his sufferings !
Thou hast no cause but general compassion.

Leon. Love of my royal mistress gave me cause,
My love of you begot my grief for him ;
For I had heard, that when the chance of war
Had bless'd Anselmo's arms with victory,
And the rich spoil of all the field, and you,
The glory of the whole, were made the prey
Of his success, that then, in spite of hate,
Revenge, and that hereditary feud
Between Valentia's and Granada's kings,
He did endear himself to your affection,
By all the worthy and indulgent ways
His most industrious goodness cou'd invent,
Proposing, by a match between Alphonso
His son, the brave Valentia prince, and you,
To end the long dissention, and unite
The jarring crowns.

Alm. Alphonso ! O Alphonso !
Thou too art quiet—long hast been at peace—
Both, both—father and son are now no more.
Then why am I ? O when shall I have rest ?
Why do I live to say you are no more ?
Why are all these things thus ?—Is it of force ?
Is there necessity I must be miserable ?
Is it of moment to the peace of Heav'n
That I should be afflicted—
—if not



ACT I. THE MOURNING BRIDE.

Why is it thus contriv'd? Why are things laid,
By some unseen hand, so as of sure consequence
They must to me bring curses, grief of heart,
The last distress of life, and sure despair?

Leon. Alas, you search too far, and think too deeply.

Alm. Why was I carried to Anselmo's court?
Or there, why was I us'd so tenderly?
Why not ill treated like an enemy?
For so my father wou'd have us'd his child.
O Alphonso, Alphonso!

Devouring seas have wash'd thee from my sight,
No time shall raze thee from my memory;
No, I will live to be thy monument:
The cruel ocean is no more thy tomb,
But in my heart thou art interr'd; there, there,
Thy dear resemblance is for ever fix'd;
My love, my Lord, my husband still, tho' lost.

Leon. Husband! O Heav'ns!

Alm. Alas! what have I said?
My grief has hurry'd me beyond all thought.
I wou'd have kept that secret, though I know
Thy love and faith to me deserve all confidence.
But 'tis the wretch's comfort still to have
Some small reserve of near and inward woe,
Some unsuspected hoard of darling grief,
Which they unseen may wail, and weep and mourn,
And glutton-like alone devour.

Leon. Indeed
I knew not this.

Alm. O no, thou know'st not half,
Know'st nothing of my sorrows—If thou didst—
If I shou'd tell thee, wou'dst thou pity me?
Tell me: I know thou wou'dst, thou art compassionate.

Leon. Witness these tears—

Alm. I thank thee—Leonora,
Indeed I do, for pitying thy sad mistress;
For 'tis, alas! the poor prerogative
Of greatness to be wretched and unpitied.
But I did promise I wou'd tell thee—What!
My miseries! Thou dost already know 'em;

10 The MOURNING BRIDE. Act I.

And when I told thee thou didst nothing know,
It was because thou didst not know Alphonso;
For to have known my loss thou must have known
His worth, his truth, and tenderness of love.

Leon. The memory of that brave prince stands fair
In all report——

And I have heard imperfectly his loss;
But, fearful to renew your troubles past,
I never did presume to ask the story.

Alm. If for my swelling heart I can, I'll tell thee.
I was a welcome captive in Valentia,
Ev'n on the day when Manuel, my father,
Led on his conqu'ring troops high as the gates
Of King Anselmo's palace, which in rage,
And heat of war, and dire revenge, he fir'd
The good king, flying to avoid the flames,
Started amidst his foes, and made captivity
His fatal refuge——Wou'd that I had fall'n

Amidst those flames!—but 'twas not so decreed.
Alphonso, who foresaw my father's cruelty,
Had borne the queen and me on board a ship
Ready to sail, and when this news was brought

We put to sea; but, being betray'd by some
Who knew our flight, we closely were pursu'd,
And almost taken, when a sudden storm
Drove us, and those that follow'd, on the coast
Of Afric: there our vessel struck the shore,
And bulging 'gainst a rock was dash'd in pieces;
But Heav'n spar'd me for yet much more affliction,
Conducting them who follow'd us to shun

The shore, and save me floating on the waves,
While the good old queen and my Alphonso perish'd.

Leon. Alas! were you then wedded to Alphonso?

Alm. That day, that fatal day our hands were join'd;
For, when my Lord beheld the ship pursuing,
And saw her rate so far exceeding ours,
He came to me, and begg'd me by my love,
I wou'd consent the priest should make us one;
That, whether death or victory ensu'd,
I might be his beyond the pow'r of fate:

ACT I. The MOURNING BRIDE.

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The Queen too did assist his suit—I granted,
And in one day was wedded and a widow.

Leon. Indeed 'twas mournful——

Alm. 'Twas—as I have told thee——

For which I mourn, and will for ever mourn!

Nor will I change these black and dismal robes,

Or ever dry those swollen and wat'ry eyes,

Or ever taste content, or peace of heart,

While I have life and thought of my Alphonso.

Leon. Look down, good Heav'n, with pity on her
sorrows,

And grant that time may bring her some relief.

Alm. O no! Time gives increase to my afflictions.

The circling hours, that gather all the woes

Which are diffus'd through the revolving year,

Come heavy laden with th' oppressing weight

To me; with me, successively, they leave

The sighs, the tears, the groans, the restless cares,

And all the damps of grief that did retard their flight;

They shake their downy wings, and scatter all

The dire collected dews on my poor head;

Then fly with joy and swiftness from me.

Leon. Hark!

The distant shouts proclaim your father's triumph.

[*Shouts at a distance.*]

O cease, for Heav'n's sake, and assuage a little

This torrent of your grief; for much I fear

'Twill urge his wrath to see you drown'd in tears,

When joy appears in ev'ry other face.

Alm. And joy he brings to ev'ry other heart,

But double, double weight of woe to mine;

For with him Garcia comes—Garcia, to whom

I must be sacrific'd, and all the vows

I gave my dear Alphonso basely broken.

No, it shall never be; for I will die

First, die ten thousand deaths—Look down, look down,

Alphonso, hear the sacred vow I make; [Kneels.]

One moment cease to gaze on perfect bliss,

And bend thy glorious eyes to earth and me;

And thou, Anselmo, if yet thou art arriv'd

13 The MOURNING BRIDE. Act I.

Thro' all impediments of purging fire,
To that bright heav'n where my Alphonso reigns,
Behold thou also, and attend my vow:
If ever I do yield or give consent,
By any action, word, or thought, to wed
Another lord, may then just Heav'n show'r down
Unheard-of curses on me, greater far
(If such there be in angry Heaven's vengeance)
Than any I have yet endur'd.—And now [Rising.
My heart has some relief, having so well
Discharg'd this debt incumbent on my love;
Yet one thing more I wou'd engage from thee.

Leon. My heart, my life and will, are only yours.

Alm. I thank thee. 'Tis but this; anon, when all
Are wrap'd and buſied in the general joy,
Thou wilt withdraw, and privately with me
Steal forth to viſit good Anſelmo's tomb.

Leon. Alas! I fear ſome fatal reſolution.

Alm. No, on my life, my faith, I mean no ill,
Nor violence.—I feel myſelf more light,
And more at large ſince I have made this vow,
Perhaps I would repeat it there more ſolemnly.
'Tis that, or ſome ſuch melancholy thought;
Upon my word, no more.

Leon. I will attend you.

S C E N E II.

ALMERIA, LEONORA, ALONZO.

Alon. The Lord Gonſalez comes to tell your Highneſs
The King is juſt arriv'd.

Alm. Conduſt him in.

[Exit Alonzo.

That's his pretence; his errand is, I know,
To fill my ears with Garcia's valiant deeds;
And gild and magnify his ſon's exploits;
But I am arm'd with ice around my heart,
Not to be warm'd with words or idle eloquence.

S C E N E III.

GONSALEZ, ALMERIA, LEONORA.

Gon. Be ev'ry day of your long life like this!
 The sun, bright conquest, and your brighter eyes,
 Have all conspir'd to blaze promiscuous light,
 And bless this day with most unequal lustre.
 Your royal father, my victorious Lord,
 Laden with spoils and ever-living laurel,
 Is entering now, in martial pomp, the palace.
 Five hundred mules precede his solemn march,
 Which groan beneath the weight of Moorish wealth;
 Chariots of war, adorn'd with glittering gems,
 Succeed; and, next, a hundred neighing steeds,
 White as the fleecy rain on Alpine hills;
 That bound and foam, and champ the golden bit,
 As they disdain'd the victory they grace;
 Pris'ners of war in shining fetters follow,
 And captains of the noblest blood of Afric
 Sweat by his chariot-wheel, and lick and grind,
 With gnashing teeth, the dust his triumphs raise.
 The swarming populace spread ev'ry wall,
 And cling, as if with claws they did enforce
 Their hold thro' clefted stones, stretching and staring
 As if they were all eyes, and ev'ry limb
 Would feed its faculty of admiration,
 While you alone retire and shun this sight;
 This sight, which is indeed not seen (tho' twice
 The multitude should gaze) in absence of your eyes.

Alm. My Lord, mine eyes ungratefully behold
 The gilded trophies of exterior honours,
 Nor will my ears be charm'd with sounding words,
 Or pompous phrase, the pageantry of souls.
 But, that my father is return'd in safety,
 I bend to Heav'n with thanks.

Gon. Excellent Princess!
 But 'tis a task unfit for my weak age
 With dying words to offer at your praise.
 Garcia, my son, your beauty's lowest slave,

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Has better done, in proving, with his sword,
The force and influence of your matchless charms.

Alm. I doubt not of the worth of Garcia's deeds,
Which had been brave, tho' I had ne'er been born.

Leon. Madam, the King. [Flourish.]

Alm. My women. I wou'd meet him.

[Attendants to Almeria enter in mourning.]

S C E N E IV.

Symphony of warlike music. Enter the KING, attended by GARCIA and several Officers. Files of Prisoners in chains, and Guards, who are rang'd in order round the stage. Almeria meets the King and kneels; afterwards Gonzalez kneels and kisses the King's hand, while Garcia does the same to the Princess.

King. Almeria, rise—My best Gonzalez, rise.
What, tears! my good old friend!——

Gon. But tears of joy.
Believe me, Sir, to see you thus has fill'd
Mine eyes with more delight than they can hold.

King. By Heav'n thou lov'st me, and I'm pleas'd thou
dost;

Take it for thanks, old man, that I rejoice
To see thee weep on this occasion——Some
Here are who seem to mourn at our success!
Why is't, Almeria, that you meet our eyes,
Upon this solemn day, in these sad weeds?
In opposition to my brightness, you
And yours are all like daughters of affliction.

Alm. Forgive me, Sir, if I in this offend.
The year, which I have vow'd to pay to Heav'n
In mourning and strict life, for my deliverance
From wreck and death, wants yet to be expir'd.

King. Your zeal to Heav'n is great, so is your debt.
Yet something too is due to me, who gave
That life which Heav'n preserv'd. A day bestow'd
In filial duty had aton'd and giv'n
A dispensation to your vow——No more.

Alm. I was weak and wilful—and a woman's error.

ACT II. The MOURNING BRIDE. 155

Yet—upon thought, it doubly wounds my sight,
To see that sable worn upon the day
Succeeding that in which our deadliest foe,
Hated Anselmo, was interr'd—By Heav'n
It looks as thou didst mourn for him: just so
Thy senseless vow appear'd to bear its date;
Not from that hour wherein thou wert preserv'd,
But that wherein the curs'd Alphonso perish'd.
Ha! What? thou dost not weep to think of that?

Gon. Have patience, royal Sir; the Princess weeps
To have offended you. If fate decreed
One pointed hour should be Alphonso's loss
And her deliverance, is she to blame?

King. I tell thee she's to blame, not to have feasted
When my first foe was laid in earth: such enmity,
Such detestation bears my blood to his,
My daughter should have revell'd at his death;
She should have made these palace walls to shake,
And all this high and ample roof to ring
With her rejoicings. What! to mourn and weep!
Then, then to weep, and pray, and grieve! by Heav'n
There's not a slave, a shackled slave of mine,
But should have smil'd that hour through all his care,
And shook his chains in transport and rude harmony.

Gon. What she has done was in excess of goodness,
Betray'd by too much piety, to seem
As if she had offended—Sure no more.

King. To seem is to commit at this conjuncture.
I wo't not have a seeming sorrow seen
To-day.—Retire, divest yourself with speed
Of that offensive black; on me be all
The violation of your vow; for you,
It shall be your excuse that I command it.

Gar. kneeling.] Your pardon, Sir, if I presume so far
As to remind you of your gracious promise.

King. Rise, Garcia,—I forgot. Yet stay, Almeria.

Alm. My boding heart!—What is your pleasure, Sir?

King. Draw near, and give your hand, and, Garcia,
yours!

Receive this lord as one whom I have found
Worthy to be your husband and my son.

Gar. Thus let me kneel to take—O! not to take—
But to devote and yield myself for ever
The slave and creature of my royal Mistress.

Gon. O let me prostrate pay my worthless thanks.—

King. No more; my promise long since pass'd, thy
services,

And Garcia's well-try'd valour, all oblige me.
This day we triumph, but to-morrow's sun,
Garcia, shall shine to grace thy nuptials——

Alm. Oh! [Faints.

Gar. She faints! help to support her.

Gon. She recovers.

King. A fit of bridal-fear; How is't, Almeria?

Alm. A sudden chillness seizes on my spirits.
Your leave, Sir, to retire.

King. Garcia, conduct her.

[Garcia leads Almeria to the door, and returns.

This idle vow hangs on her woman's fears.
I'll have a priest shall preach her from her faith,
And make it sin not to renounce that vow
Which I'd have broken. Now, what would Alonzo?

S C E N E V.

KING, GONSALEZ, GARCIA, ALONZO, Attendants,

Alon. Your beauteous captive, Zara, is arriv'd,
And with a train as if she still were wife
To Albucaim, and the Moor had conquer'd.

King. It is our will she should be so attended.
Bear hence these prisoners. Garcia, which is he
Of whose mute valour you relate such wonders?

[Prisoners led off.
Gar. Osmyn, who led the Moorish horse; but he,
Great Sir, at her request, attends on Zara.

King. He is your prisoner, as you please dispose him.

Gar. I would oblige him, but he shuns my kindness,
And with a haughty mien and stern civility
Dumbly declines all offers: if he speak,

'Tis scarce above a word, as he were born
Alone to do, and did disdain to talk,
At least to talk where he must not command.

King. Such fullness, and in a man so brave,
Must have some other cause than his captivity.
Did Zara, then, request he might attend her?

Gar. My Lord, she did.

King. That, join'd with his behaviour,
Begets a doubt. — I'd have 'em watch'd; perhaps
Her chains hang heavier on him than her own.

S C E N E VI.

KING, GONSALEZ, GARCIA, ALONZO, ZARA, and
OSMYN bound, conducted by PEREZ and a guard, and
attended by SELIM and several Mutes and Eunuchs in
a train.

King. What welcome and what honours, beauteous
Zara,

A king and conqueror can give, are yours.
A conqueror indeed where you are won!
Who with such lustre strike admiring eyes,
That had our pomp been with your presence grac'd,
Th' expecting crowd had been deceiv'd; and seen
Their monarch enter not triumphant, but
In pleasing triumph led your beauty's slave.

Zara. If I on any terms could condescend
To like captivity, or think those honours,
Which conquerors in courtesy bestow,
Of equal value with unborrow'd rule,
And native right to arbitrary sway,
I might be pleas'd when I behold this train
With usual homage wait: but when I feel
These bonds, I look with loathing on myself,
And scorn vile slavery, though doubly hid
Beneath mock praises and dissembled state.

King. Those bonds! 'Twas my command you should
be free:
How durst you, Perez, disobey?

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Per. Great Sir, grow on as brow a sword's special art
Your order was she should not wait your triumph,
But at some distance follow thus attended.

King. 'Tis false; 'twas more; I bid she should be free;
If not in words, I bid it by my eyes.
Her eyes did more than bid.—Free her and hers.
With speed—yet stay—my hands alone can make
Fit restitution here.—Thus I release you,
And by releasing you enslave myself.

Zara. Such favours, so conferr'd, tho' when unsought,
Deserve acknowledgment from noble minds.
Such thanks, as one hating to be oblig'd—
Yet hating more ingratitude, can pay,
I offer.

King. Born to excel and to command!
As by transcendant beauty to attract
All eyes, so by preheminance of soul
To rule all hearts.

Garcia, what's he, who with contracted brow
[Beholding Osmyn as they unbind him.

And fullen port, glooms downwards with his eyes,
At once regardless of his chains and liberty?

Gar. That, Sir, is he of whom I spoke; that's Osmyn.

King. He answers well the character you gave him.
Whence comes it, valiant Osmyn, that a man
So great in arms, as thou art said to be,
So hardly can endure captivity,
The common chance of war?

Osm. Because captivity
Has robb'd me of a dear and just revenge.

King. I understand not that.

Osm. I would not have you.

Zara. That gallant Moor in battle lost a friend
Whom more than life he lov'd; and the regret,
Of not revenging on his foes that loss,
Has caus'd this melancholy and despair.

King. She does excuse him; 'tis as I suspected.

[To Gonzalez.

Gon. That friend may be herself; seem not to heed
His arrogant reply: she looks concern'd.

ACT II. THE MOURNING BRIDE. 19.

King. I'll have enquiry made; perhaps his friend
Yet lives, and is a prisoner. His name?

Zara. Heli.

King. Garcia, that search shall be your care,
It shall be mine to pay devotion here:
At this fair shrine to lay my laurels down,
And raise Love's altar on the spoils of war.

Conquest and triumph now are mine no more,
Nor will I victory in camps adore;
For, lingering there, in long suspense she stands,
Shifting the prize in unresolving hands:
Unus'd to wait, I broke through her delay,
Fix'd her by force, and snatch'd the doubtful day.
Now late I find that war is but her sport;
In Love the Goddess keeps her awful court:
Fickle in fields unsteadily she flies,
But rules with settled sway in Zara's eyes.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Representing an Isle of a Temple.

GARCIA, HELI, PEREZ.

GARCIA.

THIS way, we're told, Osmyn was seen to walk;
Choosing this lonely mansion of the dead,
To mourn, brave Heli, thy mistaken fate.

Heli. Let Heaven with thunder to the centre strike me,
If to arise in very deed from death,
And to revisit with my long-clos'd eyes
This living light, cou'd to my soul or sense
Afford a thought, or shew a glimpse of joy
In least proportion to the vast delight
I feel to hear of Osmyn's name; to hear
That Osmyn lives, and I again shall see him.

Gar. I've heard with admiration of your friendship.

Per. Yonder, my Lord, behold the noble Moor.

Heli. Where, where?

Gar. I saw him not, nor any like him.

Per. I saw him, when I spoke, thwarting my views,
And striding with distemper'd haste; his eyes
Seem'd flame, and flash'd upon me with a glance,
Then forward shot their fires, which he pursu'd,
As to some object frightful yet not fear'd.

Gar. Let's haste to follow him and know the cause.

Heli. My Lord, let me intreat you to forbear:
Leave me alone to find and cure the cause.
I know his melancholy, and such starts
Are usual to his temper. It might raise him
To act some violence upon himself
So to be caught in an unguarded hour,
And when his soul gives all her passions way,
Secure and loose in friendly solitude.
I know his noble heart would burst with shame
To be surpris'd by strangers in its frailty.

Gar. Go, generous Heli, and relieve your friend.
Far be't from me officiously to pry
Or press upon the privacies of others.

S C E N E II.

GARCIA and PEREZ.

Gar. Perez, the King expects from our return
To have his jealousy confirm'd, or clear'd,
Of that appearing love which Zara bears
To Osmyn; but some other opportunity
Must make that plain.

Per. To me 'twas long since plain,
And ev'ry look from him and her confirms it.

Gar. If so, unhappiness attends their love,
And I could pity 'em. I hear some coming.
The friends, perhaps, are met; let us avoid them.

S C E N E III.

ALMERIA and LEONORA.

Alm. It was a fancy'd noise, for all is hush'd.

Leon. It bore the accent of a human voice.

Alm. It was thy fear, or else some transient wind,
Whistling through hollows of this vaulted ile.
We'll listen——

Leon. Hark!

Alm. Now all is hush'd, and still as death—'tis dreadful!
How reverend is the face of this tall pile,
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its arch'd and pond'rous roof,
By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,
Looking tranquility. It strikes an awe
And terror on my aching sight; the tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart.
Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice;
Nay, quickly speak to me, and let me hear
Thy voice;—my own affrights me with its echoes.

Leon. Let us return; the horror of this place
And silence will increase your melancholy.

Alm. It may my fears, but cannot add to that.
No, I will on; shew me Anselmo's tomb.
Lead me o'er bones, and skulls, and mouldering earth
Of human bodies, for I'll mix with them;
Or wind me in the sheet of some pale corse,
Yet green in earth, rather than be the bride
Of Garcia's more detested bed: that thought
Exerts my spirits, and my present fears
Are lost in dread of greater ill. Then shew me,
Lead me, for I am bolder grown: lead on
Where I may kneel, and pay my vows again
To him, to Heav'n, and my Alphonso's soul.

Leon. I go, but Heav'n can tell with what regret.

S C E N E IV.

*The SCENE opening, discovers a place of tombs, and
Monument fronting the view greater than the rest.*

HELL.

Heli. I wander through this maze of monuments,
Yet cannot find him.—Hark! sure 'tis the voice
Of one complaining.—There it sounds—I'll follow it.

S C E N E V.

ALMERIA and LEONORA.

Leon. Behold the sacred vault, within whose womb
The poor remains of good Anselmo rest!
Yet fresh and unconsum'd by time or worms.
What do I see? O Heav'n! either my eyes
Are false, or still the marble door remains
Unclos'd; the iron gates that lead to death
Beneath, are still wide stretch'd upon their hinge,
And staring on us with unfolded leaves.

Alm. Sure 'tis the friendly yawn of Death for me;
And that dumb mouth, significant in shew,
Invites me to the bed where I alone
Shall rest; shews me the grave where Nature, weary
And long oppress'd with woes and bending cares,
May lay the burden down, and sink in slumbers
Of peace eternal. Death, grim Death will fold
Me in his leaden arms, and press me close
To his cold clayie breast: my father then
Will cease his tyranny, and Garcia too
Will flee my pale deformity with loathing.
My soul, enlarg'd from its vile bonds, will mount
And range the starry orbs and milky ways
Of that refulgent world, where I shall swim
In liquid light, and float on seas of bliss
To my Alphonso's soul. O joy too great!
O ecstasy of thought! Help me, Anselmo;
Help me, Alphonso; take me, reach thy hand;
To thee, to thee I call, to thee, Alphonso:
O Alphonso!

S C E N E VI.

ALMERIA, LEONORA; OSMYN *ascending from the tomb.*

Osm. Who calls that wretched thing that was Alphonso?

Alm. Angels and all the host of heaven support me!

Osm. Whence is that voice, whose shrillness, from the grave,

ACT II. The MOURNING BRIDE.

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And growing to his father's shroud, roots up
Alphonso?

Alm. Mercy! Providence! O speak;
Speak to it quickly; quickly speak to me;
Comfort me, help me, hold me, hide me, hide me,
Leonora, in thy bosom, from the light,
And from my eyes.

Osm. Amazement and illusion!
Rivet and nail me where I stand, ye pow'rs,
[Coming forward,

That motionless I may be still deceiv'd.
Let me not stir, nor breathe, lest I dissolve
That tender lovely form of painted air,
So like Almeria. Ha! it sinks, it falls;
I'll catch it ere it goes, and grasp her shade.
'Tis life! 'tis warm! 'tis she, 'tis she herself!
Nor dead, nor shade, but breathing and alive!
It is Almeria, it is, it is my wife!

S C E N E VII.

ALMERIA, LEONORA, OSMYN, HEBI.

Leon. Alas! she stirs not yet, nor lifts her eyes;
He too is fainting.—Help me, help me, stranger,
Whoe'er thou art, and lend thy hand to raise
These bodies.

Hebi. Ha! 'tis he! and with Almeria!
O miracle of happiness! O joy
Unhop'd for! Does Almeria live?

Osm. Where is she?
Let me behold and touch her, and be sure
'Tis she; shew me her face, and let me feel
Her lips with mine.—'Tis she; I'm not deceiv'd;
I taste her breath; I warm'd her, and am warm'd.
Look up, Almeria, bless me with thy eyes;
Look on thy love, thy lover, and thy husband.

Alm. I've sworn I'll not wed Garcia. Why d'ye
Force me?
Is this a father?

Osm. Look on thy Alphonso:
Thy father is not here, my love, nor Garcia;

Nor am I what I seem, but thy Alphonso?
 Wilt thou not know me? Hast thou then forgot me?
 Hast thou thy eyes, yet canst not see Alphonso?
 Am I so alter'd, or art thou so chang'd,
 That, seeing my disguise, thou seest not me?

Alm. It is, it is Alphonso; 'tis his face,
 His voice, I know him now, I know him all.
 O take me to thy arms, and bear me hence,
 Back to the bottom of the boundless deep,
 To seas beneath, where thou so long hast dwelt.
 O how hast thou return'd? How hast thou charm'd
 The wildness of the waves and rocks to this?
 That thus relenting they have giv'n thee back
 To earth, to light and life, to love and me.

Osm. O I'll not ask, nor answer how, or why
 We both have backward trod the paths of Fate,
 To meet again in life; to know I have thee
 Is knowing more than any circumstance
 Or means by which I have thee——
 To fold thee thus, to press thy balmy lips,
 And gaze upon thy eyes, is so much joy,
 I have not leisure to reflect, or know,
 Or trifle time in thinking.

Alm. Stay a while——

Let me look on thee yet a little more.

Osm. What would'st thou? Thou dost put me from thee.

Alm. Yes.

Osm. And why? What dost thou mean? Why dost
 thou gaze so?

Alm. I know not; 'tis to see thy face, I think——
 It is too much! too much to bear and live!
 To see him thus again is such profusion
 Of joy, of bliss—I cannot bear—I must
 Be mad—I cannot be transported thus.

Osm. Thou Excellence, thou Joy, thou Heav'n of love!

Alm. Where hast thou been? and how art thou alive?
 How is all this? All-powerful Heav'n, what are we?
 O my strain'd heart!—let me again behold thee,
 For I weep to see thee——Art thou not paler?
 Much, much. How thou art chang'd!

Osm. Not in my love.

Alm. No, no, thy griefs, I know, have done this to thee.
Thou hast wept much, Alphonso, and I fear
Too much, too tenderly lamented me.

Osm. Wrong not my love, to say too tenderly.
No more, my life; talk not of tears or grief;
Affliction is no more, now thou art found.
Why dost thou weep, and hold thee from my arms,
My arms which ake to hold thee fast, and grow
To thee with twining? Come, come to my heart.

Alm. I will, for I should never look enough.
They would have marry'd me, but I had sworn
To Heav'n and thee, and sooner would have died—

Osm. Perfection of all faithfulness and love!

Alm. Indeed I wou'd—Nay, I wou'd tell thee all,
If I cou'd speak; how I have mourn'd and pray'd,
For I have pray'd to thee as to a saint,
And thou hast heard my pray'r, for thou art come
To my distress, to my despair, which Heav'n
Could only by restoring thee have cur'd.

Osm. Grant me but life, good Heav'n, but length of
days,

To pay some part, some little of this debt,
This countless sum of tenderness and love,
For which I stand engag'd to this all-excellence:
Then bear me in a whirlwind to my fate,
Snatch me from life, and cut me short unwarn'd;
Then, then 'twill be enough—I shall be old,
I shall have liv'd beyond all years, then,
Of yet unmeasur'd time, when I have made
This exquisite, this most amazing goodness,
Some recompence of love and matchless truth.

Alm. 'Tis more than recompence to see thy face:
If Heav'n is greater joy it is no happiness,
For 'tis not to be borne—What shall I say,
I have a thousand things to know, and ask,
And speak—That thou art here beyond all hope,
All thought, that all at once thou art before me,
And with such suddenness hast hit my sight,
Is such surprise, such mystery, such ecstacy!

It hurries all my soul, and stuns my sense.
Sure from thy father's tomb thou didst arise!

Os. I did! and thou, my love, didst call me; thou.

Alm. True, but how cam'st thou there? Wert thou alone?

Os. I was, and lying on my father's lead,
When broken echoes of a distant voice
Disturb'd the sacred silence of the vault

In murmurs round my head. I rose and listen'd,
And thought I heard thy spirit call Alphonso;
I thought I saw thee too; but, O! I thought not
That I indeed should be so blest'd to see thee.

Alm. But still, how cam'st thou hither? How thus?—Ha!
What's he, who, like thyself, is started here
Ere seen?

Os. Where? Ha! What do I see? Antonio!
I'm fortunate indeed——My friend too safe!

Heli. Most happily in finding you thus blest'd.

Alm. More miracles! Antonio too escap'd!

Os. And twice escap'd; both from the rage of seas
And war; for in the fight I saw him fall.

Heli. But fell unhurt; a pris'ner—as yourself,
And as yourself made free, hither I came
Impatiently to seek you, where I knew
Your grief would lead you to lament Anselmo.

Os. There are no wonders, or else all is wonder.

Heli. I saw you on the ground, and rais'd you up:
When with astonishment I saw Almeria.

Os. I saw her too, and therefore saw not thee.

Alm. Nor I; nor could I, for my eyes were yours.

Os. What means the bounty of all-gracious Heav'n,
That persevering still, with open hand,
It scatters good as in a waste of mercy?
Where will this end? But Heav'n is infinite
In all, and can continue to bestow

When scanty number shall be spent in telling.

Leon. Or I'm deceiv'd, or I beheld the glimpse

Of two in shining habits cross the isle,
Who by their pointing seem to mark this place.

Alm. Sure I have dreamt, if we must part so soon.

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Osm. I wish, at least, our parting were a dream,
Or we could sleep till we again were met.

Heli. Zara with Selim, Sir; I saw, and know 'em:
You must be quick, for Love will lend her wings.

Alm. What love? Who is she? Why are you alarm'd?

Osm. She's the reverse of thee; she's my unhappiness.
Harbour no thought that may disturb thy peace,
But gently take thyself away, lest she
Should come, and see the straining of my eyes
To follow thee. I'll think how we may meet
To part no more. My friend will tell thee all;
How I escap'd, how I am here, and thus,
How I'm not call'd Alphonso now, but Osmyn.
And he Heli. All, all he will unfold
Ere next we meet——

Alm. Sure we shall meet again——

Osm. We shall; we part not but to meet again.
Gladness and warmth of ever-kindling love
Dwell with thee, and revive thy heart in absence.

SCENE VIII.

OSMYN alone.

Osm. Yet I behold her—yet—and now no more.
Turn your light inward, eyes, and view my thought;
So shall you still behold her—'t will not be.
O impotence of sight! mechanic sense,
Which to exterior objects ow'st thy faculty,
Not feeling of election but necessity.
Thus do our eyes, and do all common mirrors,
Successively reflect succeeding images,
Not what they would; but must, a star, or road,
Just as the hand of Chance administers.
Not so the mind, whose undetermin'd view
Revolves, and to the present adds the past,
Essaying farther to futurity,
But that in vain. I have Almeria here,
At once, as I before have seen her often——

And give thee, for 'em in exchange, my love.
 O that the grief itself I saw to poor

ZARA, SELIM, OSMYN.

Zara. See where he stands, folded and fix'd to earth,
 Stiff'ning in thought, a statue among statues.
 Why, cruel Osmyn, dost thou fly me thus?
 Is it well done? Is this then the return
 For fame, for honour, and for empire lost?
 But what is loss of honour, fame and empire?
 Is this the recompence reserv'd for love?
 Why dost thou leave my eyes, and fly my arms,
 To find this place of horror and obscurity?
 Am I more loathsome to thee than the grave,
 That thou dost seek to shield thee there, and shun
 My love? But to the grave I'll follow thee—
 He looks not, minds not, hears not. Barb'rous man!
 Am I neglected thus? Am I despis'd?
 Not heard! Ungrateful Osmyn!

Osm. Ha, 'tis Zara!

Zara. Yes, traitor! Zara, lost abandon'd Zara
 Is a regardless suppliant now to Osmyn.
 The slave, the wretch that she redeem'd from death,
 Disdains to listen now or look on Zara.

Osm. Far be the guilt of such reproaches from me;
 Lost in myself, and blinded by my thoughts,
 I saw you not 'till now.

Zara. Now then you see me—
 But with such dumb and thankless eyes you look,
 Better I was unseen than seen thus coldly.

Osm. What would you from a wretch that came to
 mourn,
 And only for his sorrows chose this solitude?
 Look round; joy is not here, nor cheerfulness.
 You have pursu'd Misfortune to its dwelling,
 Yet look for gaiety and gladness there.

Zara. Inhuman! why, why dost thou rack me thus,
 And with perverseness from the purpose answer?
 What is't to me this house of misery?
 What joy do I require? If thou dost mourn,

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I come to mourn with thee; to share thy griefs,
And give thee, for 'em, in exchange, my love.

Osm. O that's the greatest grief—I am so poor
I have not wherewithal to give again.

Zara. Thou hast a heart, tho' 'tis a savage one;
Give it me as it is; I ask no more
For all I've done, and all I have endur'd:
For saving thee, when I beheld thee first,
Driv'n by the tide upon my country's coast,
Pale and expiring, drench'd in briny waves,
Thou and thy friend, till my compassion found thee:
Compassion! scarce will't own that name, so soon,
So quickly was it love, for thou wert godlike
Ev'n then. Kneeling on earth I loos'd my hair,
And with it dry'd those wat'ry cheeks, then chaf'd
Thy temples, 'till reviving blood arose,
And, like the morn, vermilion'd o'er thy face.
O Heav'n! how did my heart rejoice and ache
When I beheld the day-break of thy eyes,
And felt the balm of thy respiring lips!

Osm. O call not to my mind what you have done,
It sets a debt of that account before me
Which shews me poor and bankrupt ev'n in hopes.

Zara. The faithful Selim and my women know
The dangers which I tempted to conceal you.
You know how I abus'd the cred'ulous King,
What arts I us'd to make you pass on him,
When he receiv'd you as the Prince of Fez,
And, as my kinsman, honour'd and advanc'd you.
O, why do I relate what I have done?
What did I not? was't not for you this war
Commenc'd? Not knowing who you were, nor why
You hated Manuel, I urg'd my husband
To this invasion, where he late was lost,
Where all is lost, and I am made a slave.
Look on me now from empire fall'n to slavery;
Think on my sufferings first, then look on me;
Think on the cause of all, then view thyself;
Reflect on Osmyn, and then look on Zara,
The fall'n, the lost, and now the captive Zara.

And now abandon'd— Say, what then is Osmyn!

Osm. A fatal wretch—a huge stupendous ruin,
That tumbling on its prop crush'd all beneath,
And bore contiguous palaces to earth.

Zara. Yet thus, thus fall'n, thus level'd with the vilest,
If I have gain'd thy love 'tis glorious ruin:
Ruin! 'tis still to reign, and to be more
A queen! for what are riches, empire, pow'r,
But larger means to gratify the will?
The steps on which we tread, to rise and reach
Our wish, and that obtain'd down with the scaffolding.
Of sceptres, crowns, and thrones; they have serv'd their
end,
And are, like lumber, to be left and scorn'd.

Osm. Why was I made the instrument to throw
In bonds the frame of this exalted mind?

Zara. We may be free; the conqueror is mine;
In chains unseen I hold him by the heart,
And can unwind or strain him as I please.
Give me thy love, I'll give thee liberty.

Osm. In vain you offer, and in vain require
What neither can bestow. Set free yourself,
And leave a slave the wretch that would be so.

Zara. Thou canst not mean so poorly as thou talkest.

Osm. Alas, you know me not!

Zara. Not who thou art;
But what this last ingratitude declares,
This grovelling baseness—Thou say'st true, I know
Thee not; for what thou art yet wants a name;
But something so unworthy and so vile,
That to have lov'd thee makes me yet more lost,
Than all the malice of my other fate.

Traitor, monster, cold and perfidious slave,
A slave not daring to be free, nor dares
To love above him, for 'tis dangerous
'Tis that I knew; for thou dost look with eyes
Sparkling desire, and trembling to possess.
I know my charms have reach'd thy very soul,
And thrill'd thee through with darted fires, but thou
Dost fear so much thou dar'st not wish. The King

ACT II. THE MOURNING BRIDE. 31

There, there's the dreadful sound, the King's thy rival!

Sel. Madam, the King is here, and entering now.

Zara. As I could wish, by Heaven, I'll be revenged!

ZARA, OSMYN, SELIN, the KING, PEREZ, and Attendants.

King. Why does the fairest of her kind withdraw
Her shining from the day, to gild this scene
Of death and night? Ha, what disorders this!
Somewhat I heard of King and rival mention'd,
What's he that dares be rival to the King?
Or lift his eyes to like where I adore?

Zara. There, he; your prisoner, and that was my slave.

King. How! Better than my hopes! does she accuse
him? *[Aside.]*

Zara. Am I become so low by my captivity,
And do your arms so lessen what they conquer,
That Zara must be made the sport of slaves?
And shall the wretch, whom yester sun beheld
Waiting my nod, the creature of my pow'r,
Presume to-day to plead audacious love,
And build bold hopes on my dejected fate?

King. Better for him to tempt the rage of Heaven,
And wrench the bolt red-hissing from the hand
Of him that thunders, than but think that insolence.
'Tis daring for a god. Hence to the wheel
With that Ixion, who aspires to hold
Divinity embrac'd; to whips and prisons
Drag him with speed, and rid me of his face.

Zara. Compassion led me to bemoan his state,
Whole former faith had merited much more,
And through my hopes in you I undertook
He should be set at large; thence sprung his insolence,
And what was charity he constr'd love.

King. Enough: his punishment be what you please.
But let me lead you from this place of sorrow,
To one where young delights attend, and joys

Yet new, unborn, and blooming in the bud,
Which wait to be full-blown at your approach,
And spread like roses to the morning sun;
Where ev'ry hour shall roll in circling joys,
And Love shall wing the tedious waiting day:
Life without Love is load, and time stands still;
What we refuse to him, to Death we give;
And then, then only, when we love we live.

ACT III. SCENE I.*A Prison.**OSMYN alone with a paper.***OSMYN.**

BUT now, and I was clos'd within the tomb
That holds my father's ashes; and, but now,
Where he was pris'ner I am too imprison'd.
Sure 'tis the hand of Heav'n that leads me thus,
And for some purpose points out these remembrances.
In a dark corner of my cell I found
This paper, what it is this light will shew.
"If my Alphonso"——Ha! [Reading.]
"If my Alphonso live, restore him, Heav'n;
"Give me more weight, crush my declining years
"With bolts, with chains, imprisonment and want,
"But bless my son, visit not him for me."
It is his hand; this was his pray'r—yet more:
"Let ev'ry hair, which Sorrow by the roots [Reading.]
"Tears from my hoary and devoted head,
"Be doubled in thy mercies to my son:
"Not for myself, but him, hear me, all gracious"——
'Tis wanting what shou'd follow—Heav'n shou'd follow,
But 'tis torn off—Why shou'd that word alone
Be torn from his petition? 'Twas to Heav'n,
But Heav'n was deaf, Heav'n heard him not; but thus,
Thus as the name of Heav'n from this is torn,
So did it tear the ears of Mercy from

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His voice, shutting the gates of pray'r against him,
 If piety be thus debarr'd access
 On high, and of good men the very best
 Is singled out to bleed, and bear the scourge,
 What is reward? or what is punishment?
 But who shall dare to tax eternal Justice?
 Yet I may think——I may, I must; for thought
 Precedes the will to think, and Error lives
 Ere Reason can be born. Reason, the pow'r
 To guess at right and wrong, the twinkling lamp
 Of wand'ring life, that winks by turns,
 Fooling the follower betwixt shade and shining.
 What noise! Who's there? My friend! how cam'st thou
 hither?

SCENE II.

OSMYN and HELL.

Heli. The time's too precious to be spent in telling.
 The Captain, influenc'd by Almeria's pow'r,
 Gave order to the guards for my admittance.

Osm. How does Almeria? But I know she is
 As I am. Tell me, may I hope to see her?

Heli. You may; anon, at midnight, when the King
 Is gone to rest, and Garcia is retir'd,
 (Who takes the privilege to visit late,
 Presuming on a bridegroom's right), she'll come.

Osm. She'll come; 'tis what I wish, yet what I fear.
 She'll come; but whither, and to whom? O Heav'n!
 To a vile prison and a captiv'd wretch,
 To one who had the never known the had
 Been happy. Why, why was that heavenly creature
 Abandon'd o'er to love what Heav'n forsakes?
 Why does she follow, with unwearied steps,
 One who has tir'd misfortune with pursuing?
 One driv'n about the world, like blasted leaves
 And chaff, the sport of adverse winds, till late,
 At length, imprison'd in some cleft of rock
 Or earth, it rests and rots to silent dust?

Heli. Have hopes, and hear the voice of better fate.

I've learn'd there are disorders ripe for mutiny,
 Among the troops, who thought to share the plunder,
 Which Manuel to his own use and avarice
 Converts. This news has reach'd Valentia's frontiers,
 Where many of your subjects, long oppress'd
 With tyranny and grievous impositions,
 Are risen in arms, and call for chiefs to head
 And lead them to regain their rights and liberty.

Os. By Heav'n thou'lt rous'd me from my lethargy.
 The spirit which was deaf to my own wrongs,
 And the loud cries of my dead father's blood,
 Deaf to revenge—nay, which refus'd to hear
 The piercing sighs and murmurs of my love
 Yet unenjoy'd; what not Almeria could
 Revive, or raise, my people's voice has waken'd.
 O my Antonio, I am all on fire,
 My soul is up in arms, ready to charge
 And bear amidst the foe with conqu'ring troops,
 I hear 'em call to lead 'em on to liberty,
 To victory; their shouts and clamours rend
 My ears, and reach the heav'ns: Where is the King?
 Where is Alphonso? Ha! where! where indeed?
 O I could tear and burst the strings of life,
 To break those chains. Off, off, ye stains of royalty!
 Off, slavery! O curse, that I alone
 Can beat and flutter in my cage, when I
 Would soar, and sloop at victory beneath!
Hal. Our posture of affairs, and scanty time,
 My Lord, require you should compose yourself,
 And think on what we may reduce to practice.
 Zara, the cause of your restraint, may be
 The means of liberty restor'd. That gain'd,
 Occasion will not fail to point out ways
 For your escape. Mean time I've thought already
 With speed and safety to convey myself
 Where not far off some malecontents hold council
 Nightly, who hate this tyrant; some who love
 Anselmo's memory, and will, for certain,
 When they shall know you live, assist your cause.

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Ofm. My friend and counsellor, as thou think'st fit
So do. I will with patience wait my fortune.

Heli. When Zara comes abate of your aversion.

Ofm. I hate her not, nor can dissemble love,
But as I may I'll do. I have a paper

Which I would shew thee, friend, but that the light
Would hold thee here, and clog thy expedition.

Within I found it, by my father's hand
'Twas writ, a pray'r for me, wherein appears

Paternal love prevailing o'er his sorrows;
Such sanctity, such tenderness, so mix'd

With grief, as wou'd draw tears from inhumanity.

Heli. The care of Providence sure left it there,
To arm your mind with hope. Such piety

Was never heard in vain: Heav'n has in store
For you those blessings it with-held from him.

In that assurance live, which time, I hope,
And our next meeting will confirm.

Ofm. Farewell,
My friend; the good thou dost deserve attend thee.

S C E N E III.

OSMYN alone.

Ofm. I've been to blame, and question'd with impiety
The care of Heav'n. Not so my father bore

More anxious grief. This should have better taught me
This lesson, in some hour of inspiration

By him set down, when his pure thoughts were borne,
Like fumes of sacred incense, o'er the clouds,

And wafted thence, on angels wings, thro' ways
Of light, to the bright Source of all; for there

He in the book of Prescience saw this day,
And, waking to the world and mortal sense,

Left this example of his resignation,
This his last legacy to me, which here

I'll treasure as more worth than diadems,
Or all extended rule of regal pow'r.

SCENE IV.

OSMYN, ZARA *veiled*.

Os. What brightness breaks upon me thus through shades;
And promises a day to this dark dwelling?
Is it my love? —

Zara. O that thy heart had taught

[Lifting up her veil.]
Thy tongue that saying?

Os. *Zara!* I am betray'd by my surprise.

Zara. What, does my face displease thee?

That, having seen it, thou dost turn thy eyes
Away, as from deformity and horror?

If so, this sable curtain shall again

Be drawn, and I will stand before thee seeing

And unseen. Is it my love? Ask again

That question; speak again in that soft voice,

And look again with wishes in thy eyes.

O no, thou canst not, for thou seest me now,

As she whose savage breast hath been the cause

Of these thy wrongs; as she whose barb'rous rage

Has loaded thee with chains and galling irons:

Well dost thou scorn me and upbraid my falleness:

'Could one who lov'd thus torture whom she lov'd?

No, no, it must be hatred, dire revenge,

And detestation that could use thee thus.

So dost thou think; then do but tell me so;

Tell me, and thou shalt see how I'll revenge

Thee on this false one, how I'll stab and tear

This heart of flint 'till it shall bleed, and thou

Shalt weep for mine, forgetting thy own miseries.

Os. You wrong me, beauteous *Zara*, to believe

I bear my fortunes with so low a mind,

As still to meditate revenge on all

Whom Chance, or Fate, working by secret causes,

Has made perforce subservient to that end

The heav'nly pow'rs allot me: no, not you

But Destiny and inauspicious stars

Have cast me down to this low being ; or,
Granting you had, from you I have deserv'd it.

Zara. Canst thou forgive me then ? wilt thou believe
So kindly of my fault to call it madness ?

O give that madness yet a milder name,
And call it passion ; then be still more kind,
And call that passion love.

Ofm. Give it a name
Or being as you please, such I will think it.

Zara. O thou dost wound me more with this thy
goodness,

Than e'er thou couldst with bitterest reproaches ;
Thy anger could not pierce thus to my heart.

Ofm. Yet I could wish——

Zara. Haste me to know it : what ?

Ofm. That at this time I had not been this thing.

Zara. What thing ?

Ofm. This slave.

Zara. O Heav'n ! my fears interpret
This thy silence ; somewhat of high concern,
Long fashioning within thy labouring mind,
And now just ripe for birth, my rage has ruin'd.
Have I done this ? Tell me, am I so curs'd ?

Ofm. Time may have still one fated hour to come,
Which, wing'd with liberty, might overtake
Occasion past.

Zara. Swift as occasion I
Myself will fly, and earlier than the morn
Wake thee to freedom. Now 'tis late, and yet
Some news few minutes past arriv'd, which seem'd
To shake the temper of the King——Who knows
What racking cares disease a monarch's bed ?
Or Love, that late at night still lights his lamp,
And strikes his rays through dusk and folded lids,
Forbidding rest, may stretch his eyes awake,
And force their balls abroad at this dead hour.
I'll try.

Ofm. I have not merited this grace ;
Nor, shou'd my secret purpose take effect,
Can I repay, as you require, such benefits.

Zara. Thou canst not owe me more, nor have I more
To give, than I've already lost. But now,
So does the form of our engagements rest,
Thou hast the wrong till I redeem thee hence;
That done I leave thy justice to return
My love. Adieu.

S C E N E V.

OSMYN alone.

Osmy. This woman has a soul
Of godlike mould, intrepid and commanding,
And challenges, in spite of me, my best
Esteem; to this she's fair, few more can boast
Of pers'nal charms, or with less vanity
Might hope to captivate the hearts of kings;
But she has passions which outstrip the wind,
And tear her virtues up, as tempest-roots
The sea. I fear, when she shall know the truth,
Some swift and dire event of her blind rage
Will make all fatal. But behold she comes!
For whom I fear, to shield me from my fears,
The cause and comfort of my boding heart.

S C E N E VI.

ALMERIA and OSMYN.

Osmy. My life, my health, my liberty, my all!
How shall I welcome thee to this sad place?
How speak to thee the words of joy and transport?
How run into thy arms, with-held by fetters,
Or take thee into mine, while I'm thus manacled,
And pinion'd like a thief or murderer?
Shall I not hurt or bruise thy tender body,
And stain thy bosom with the rust of these
Rude irons? Must I meet thee thus, Almeria?

Alm. Thus, thus we parted, thus to meet again.
Thou toldst me thou wouldst think how we might meet
To part no more. — Now we will part no more;
For these thy chains, or death, shall join us ever.

Osmy. Hard means to ratify that word! — O cruelty,

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That ever I should think beholding thee
A torture!—yet such is the bleeding anguish
Of my heart to see thy sufferings—O Heaven!
That I could almost turn my eyes away,
Or with thee from my sight.

Alm. O say not so,
Though 'tis because thou lov'st me! Do not say,
On any terms, that thou dost with me from thee.
No, no; 'tis better thus, that we together
Feed on each others heart, devour our woes
With mutual appetite, and, mingling in
One cup the common stream of both our eyes,
Drink bitter draughts with never-lacking thirst;
Thus better than for any cause to part.
What dost thou think? Look not so tenderly
Upon me—Speak, and take me in thy arms.—
Thou canst not! thy poor arms are bound, and strive
In vain with the remorseless chains which gnaw
And eat into thy flesh, fest'ring thy limbs
With rankling rust.

Osm. Oh! O——

Alm. Give me that sigh.
Why dost thou heave and stifle in thy griefs?
Thy heart will burst, thy eyes look red and start;
Give thy soul way, and tell me thy dark thought.

Osm. For this world's rule I would not wound thy
breast

With such a dagger as then stuck my heart.

Alm. Why, why? To know it cannot wound me more
Than knowing thou hast felt it. Tell it me.—
Thou giv'st me pain with too much tenderness.

Osm. And thy excessive love distracts my sense.
O wouldst thou be less killing, soft, or kind,
Grief could not double thus his darts against me.

Alm. Thou dost me wrong, and Grief too robs my
heart,

If there be not every other shaft;
Thy second self should feel each other wound,
And woe should be in equal portions dealt.
I am thy wife——

Osm. O thou hast search'd too deep !
 There, there I bleed ; there pull the cruel cords
 That strain my cracking nerves ; engines and wheels,
 That piece-meal grind, are beds of down and balm,
 To that soul-racking thought !

Alm. Then I am curs'd
 Indeed, if that be so ; if I'm thy torment,
 Kill me, then kill me, dash me with thy chains,
 Tread on me. What ! Am I the bosom-snake,
 That sucks thy warm life-blood, and gnaws thy heart ?
 O that thy words had force to break those bonds,
 As they have strength to tear this heart in sunder,
 So shou'dst thou be at large from all oppression !
 Am I, am I of all thy woes the worst !

Osm. My all of bliss, my everlasting life,
 Soul of my soul, and end of all my wishes,
 Why dost thou thus unman me with thy words,
 And melt me down to mingle with thy weepings ?
 Why dost thou ask ? why dost thou talk thus piercingly ?
 Thy sorrows have disturb'd thy peace of mind,
 And thou dost speak of miseries impossible.

Alm. Didst thou not say, that racks and-wheels were
 balm,
 And beds of ease, to thinking me thy wife.

Osm. No, no ; nor should the subtlest pains that hell,
 Or hell-born Malice can invent, extort
 A wish or thought from me to have thee other.
 But wilt thou know what harrows up my heart ?
 Thou art my wife—nay, thou art yet my bride !
 The sacred union of connubial Love,
 Yet unaccomplish'd, his mysterious rites
 Delay'd, nor has our hymeneal torch
 Yet lighted up his last most grateful sacrifice,
 But dash'd with rain from eyes, and swal'd with sighs,
 Burns dim, and glimmers with expiring light.
 Is this dark cell a temple for that god ?
 Or this vile earth an altar for such offerings ?
 This den for slaves, this dungeon damp'd with woes,
 Is this our marriage-bed ? are these our joys ?
 Is this to call thee mine ? O hold my heart !

ACT III THE MOURNING BRIDE

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To call thee mine ! Yes, thus, even thus to call
Thee mine were comfort, joy, extremest ecstasy ;
But, O ! thou art not mine, not ev'n in misery,
And 'tis deny'd to me to be so blest'd
As to be wretched with thee.

Alm. No ! not that
Th' extremest malice of our fate can hinder ;
That still is left us, and on that we'll feed,
As on the leavings of Calamity ;
There we will feast, and smile on past distress,
And hug, in scorn of it, our mutual ruin.

Osm. O thou dost talk, my love, as one resolv'd,
Because not knowing danger ; but look forward ;
Think of to-morrow, when thou shalt be torn
From these weak, struggling, unextended arms :
Think how my heart will heave, my eyes will strain,
To grasp and reach what is deny'd my hands ;
Think how the blood will start, and tears will gush,
To follow thee my separating soul.
Think how I am when thou shalt wed with Garcia !
Then will I smear these walls with blood, disfigure
And dash my face, and rive my clotted hair,
Break on the flinty floor my throbbing breast,
And grovel with gash'd eyes to scratch a grave,
Stripping my nails to tear this pavement up
And bury me alive.

Alm. Heart-breaking horror !

Osm. Then Garcia shall ly panting on thy bosom,
Luxurious, revelling amidst thy charms,
And thou perforce must yield and aid his transport.
Hell ! hell ! have I not cause to rage and rave ?
What are all racks and wheels and whips to this ?
Are they not soothing softness, sinking ease,
And wafting air to this ? O my Almeria !
What do the damn'd endure, but to despair,
And knowing heav'n, to know it lost for ever !

Alm. O, I am struck ! thy words are bolts of ice,
Which, shot into my breast, now melt and chill me.
Behatter, shake, and faint with thrilling fears.
Na, hold me not—O let us not support,

But sink each other deeper yet, down, down,
Where, levell'd low, no more we'll lift our eyes,
But, prone and dumb, rot the firm face of earth
With rivers of incessant scalding rain.

S C E N E VII.

ZARA, PEREZ, SELIM, OSMYN, ALMERIA.

Zara. Somewhat of weight to me requires his freedom.
Dare you dispute the King's command? Behold
The royal signet.

Per. I obey, yet beg
Your Majesty one moment to defer
Your ent'ring, till the Princess is return'd
From visiting the noble prisoner.

Zara. Ha!
What say'st thou?

Osm. We are lost! undone! discovered!
Retire, my life, with speed—Alas! we're seen:
Speak of compassion; let her hear you speak
Of interceding for me with the King:
Say something quickly to conceal our loves
If possible——

Alm. ——I cannot speak.

Osm. Let me
Conduct you forth as not perceiving her,
But till she's gone, then bless me thus again.

Zara. Trembling and weeping as he leads her forth!
Confusion in his face, and grief in hers!
'Tis plain I've been abus'd.——Death and destruction!
How shall I search into this mystery?
The bluest blast of pestilential air
Strike, damp, deaden her charms, and kill his eyes;
Perdition catch 'em both, and Ruin part 'em.

Osm. This charity to one unknown, and thus

[Aloud to Almeria as she goes out.

Distress'd, Heav'n will repay; all thanks are poor.

SCENE V

ZARA, SELIM, OSMAN.

Zara. Damn'd, damn'd dissembler! yet I will be calm.
Choke in my rage, and know the utmost depth
Of this deceiver—— You seem much surpriz'd.

Osman. At your return so soon and unexpected!

Zara. And so unwith'd, unwanted too, it seems.
Confusion! yet I will contain myself.——
You're grown a favourite since last we parted;
Perhaps I'm saucy and intruding——

Osman.—— Madam!

Zara. I did not know the Princess' favourite;
Your pardon, Sir—— Mistake me not; you think
I'm angry; you're deceiv'd. I came to set
You free, but shall return much better pleas'd
To find you have an interest superior.

Osman. You do not come to mock my miseries?

Zara. I do.

Osman. I could at this time spare your mirth.

Zara. I know thou could'st; but I'm not often pleas'd,
And will indulge it now. What miseries?
Who would not be thus happily confin'd,
To be the care of weeping Majesty?
To have contending queens, at dead of night,
Forfake their down, to wake with wat'ry eyes,
And watch like tapers o'er your hours of rest.
O curse! I cannot hold——

Osman. Come, 'tis too much.

Zara. Villain!

Osman. How, Madam!

Zara. Thou shalt die.

Osman. I thank you.

Zara. Thou liest, for now I know for whom thou'lt live.

Osman. Then you may know for whom I'd die.

Zara. Hell! hell!

Yet I'll be calm—— Dark and unknown betrayer!
But now the dawn begins, and the slow hand
Of Fate is stretch'd to draw the veil, and leave
Thee bare, the naked mark of public view.

Osm. You may be still deceiv'd; 'tis in my pow'r.

Zara. Who waits there? As you will answer it, look
this slave [To the guard.]

Attempt no means to make himself away.

I've been deceiv'd. The public safety now

Requires he shou'd be more confin'd, and none

No, not the Princess, suffer'd or to see

Or speak with him. I'll quit you to the King.—

Vile and ingrate! too late thou shalt repent

The base injustice thou hast done my love;

Yes, thou shalt know, spight of thy past distress,

And all those ills which thou so long hast mourn'd,

Heav'n has no rage like love to hatred turn'd,

Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A Room of State.

ZARA and SELIN.

ZARA.

THOU hast already rack'd me with thy stay,

Therefore oblige me not to ask thee twice:

Reply at once to all. What is concluded?

Sel. Your accusation highly has incens'd

The King, and were alone enough to urge

The fate of Osmyn; but, to that, fresh news

Has since arriv'd of more revolting troops.

'Tis certain Heli too is fled, and with him

(Which breeds amazement and distraction) some

Who bore high offices of weight and trust

Both in the state and army. This confirms

The King in full belief of all you told him

Concerning Osmyn, and his correspondence

With them who first began the mutiny.

Wherefore a warrant for his death is sign'd,

And order given for public execution.

Zara. Ha! haste thee! fly, prevent his fate and mine!

Act IV. THE MOURNING BRIDE.

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Find out the King, tell him I have of weight
More than his crown & impart ere Osmyn die.

Sel. It needs not, for the King will straight be here;
And as to your revenge, not his own int'rest,
Pretend to sacrifice the life of Osmyn.

Zara. What shall I say? Invent, contrive, advise
Somewhat to blind the King, and save his life
In whom I live. Spite of my rage and pride
I am a woman and a lover mine.

O! 'tis more grief but to suppose his death
Than still to meet the rigour of his scorn.

From my despair my anger had its source,
When he is dead I must despair for ever.

For ever! that's despair——It was distrust
Before; distrust will ever be in love,

And anger in distrust, both short-liv'd pains;
But in despair, and ever-during death,

No term, no bound, but infinite of woe!
O torment but to think! what then to bear?

Not to be borne——Devise the means to shun it,
Quick, or by Heav'n this dagger drinks thy blood.

Sel. My life is yours, nor wish I to preserve it
But to serve you. I have already thought.

Zara. Forgive my rage, I know thy love and truth.
But say, what's to be done? or when, or how,
Shall I prevent or stop th' approaching danger?

Sel. You must still seem most resolute and fix'd
On Osmyn's death: too quick a change to mercy
Might breed suspicion of the cause. Advise
That execution may be done in private.

Zara. On what pretence?

Sel. Your own request's enough;
However, for a colour, tell him you
Have cause to fear his guards may be corrupted,
And some of them bought off to Osmyn's int'rest,
Who at the place of execution will
Attempt to force his way for an escape;
The state of things will count'nance all suspicions;
Then offer to the king to have him strangled
In secret by your mutes, and get an order

That none but mutes may have admittance to him.
I can no more, the King is here. Obtain
This grant—and I'll acquaint you with the rest.

SCENE II.

KING, GONSALEZ, PEREZ, ZARA, SELIM.

King. Bear to the dungeon those rebellious slaves,
Th' ignoble curs that yept to fill the cry,
And spend their mouths in barking tyranny;
But for their leaders, Sancho and Ramirez,
Let 'em be led away to present death.
Perez, see it perform'd; and give

Gon. Might I presume,
Their execution better were deferr'd,
'Till Osmyn die. Mean time we may learn more
Of this conspiracy.

King. Then be it so.
Stay, soldier, they shall suffer with the Moor.
Are none return'd of those that follow'd Heli?

Gon. None, Sir. Some papers have been since discover'd
In Roderigo's house, who fled with him,
Which seem to intimate as if Alphonso
Were still alive, and arming in Valentia,
Which wears indeed this colour of a truth,
They who are fled have that way bent their course:
Of the same nature divers notes have been
Dispers'd, t' amuse the people; whereupon
Some ready of belief have rais'd this rumour,
That, being sav'd upon the coast of Afric,
He there disclos'd himself to Albucacin,
And, by a secret compact made with him,
Open'd and urg'd the way to this invasion,
While he himself, returning to Valentia,
In private undertook to raise this tumult.

Zara. Ha! hear'st thou that? Is Osmyn then Alphonso?
O Heav'n! a thousand things occur at once
To my remembrance, now, that make it plain.
O certain death for him, as sure despair
For me if it be known!——If not, what hope:

ACT IV. The MOURNING BRIDE.

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Have I? Yet 'twere the lowest baseness now
To yield him up.—No, I will still conceal him,
And try the force of yet more obligations.

Gon. 'Tis not impossible; yet it may be
That some impostor has usurp'd his name.
Your beauteous captive Zara can inform,
If such a one so 'scaping was receiv'd
At any time in Albucacim's court.

King. Pardon, fair excellence, this long neglect:
An unforeseen unwelcome hour of business
Has thrust between us and our while of love;
But wearing now apace with ebbing sand,
Will quickly waste, and give again the day.

Zara. You're too secure: the danger is more imminent
Than your high courage suffers you to see;
While Osmyn lives you are not safe.

King. His doom
Is pass'd, if you revoke it not he dies.

Zara. 'Tis well. By what I heard upon your entrance,
I find I can unfold what yet concerns
You more. One who did call himself Alphonso
Was cast upon my coast, as is reported,
And oft had private conference with the King;
To what effect I knew not then: but he,
Alphonso, secretly departed, just
About the time our arms embark'd for Spain.
What I know more is, that a triple league
Of strictest friendship was profess'd between
Alphonso, Heli, and the traitor Osmyn.

King. Public report is ratify'd in this.

Zara. And Osmyn's death requir'd of strong necessity.

King. Give order straight that all the prisoners die.

Zara. Forbear a moment; somewhat more I have
Worthy your private ear, and this your minister.

King. Let all except Gonzalez leave the room.

3 THE MOURNING BRIDE. ACT IV.

S C E N E III.

KING, GONSALEZ, ZARA, SELIM.

Zara. I am your captive, and you've us'd me nobly,
And in return of that, though otherwise
Your enemy, I have discover'd Osmyn
His private practice and conspiracy
Against your state; and, fully to discharge
Myself of what I've undertaken, now
I think it fit to tell you, that your guards
Are tainted; some among 'em have resolv'd
To rescue Osmyn at the place of death.

King. Is treason then so near us as our guards!

Zara. Most certain, though my knowledge is not yet
So ripe to point at the particular men.

King. What's to be done?

Zara. That too I will advise.

I have remaining in my train some mutes,
A present once from the Sultana Queen,
In the Grand Signor's court: these from their infancy
Are practis'd in the trade of death, and shall
(As there the custom is) in private strangle
Osmyn.

Gon. My Lord, the Queen advises well.

King. What off'ring, or what recompence remains
In me that can be worthy so great services?

To cast beneath your feet the crown you sav'd,
Though on the head that wears it, 'twere too little.

Zara. Of that hereafter; but, mean time, 'tis fit
You give strict charge that none may be admitted
To see the pris'ner, but such mutes as I
Shall send.

King. Who waits there?

S C E N E IV.

KING, GONSALEZ, ZARA, SELIM, PEREZ.

King. On your life take heed,
That only Zara's mutes, or such who bring
Her warrant, have admittance to the Moor.

ACT IV. The MOURNING BRIDE.

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Zara. They, and no other, not the Princess' self.

Per. Your Majesty shall be obey'd.

King. Retire.

SCENE V.

KING, GONSALEZ, ZARA, SELIN.

Gon. That interdiction so particular,
Pronounc'd with vehemence against the Princess,
Should have more meaning than appears barefac'd.

The King is blinded by his love, and heeds
It not.—Your Majesty sure might have spar'd
That last restraint; you hardly can suspect
The Princess is confed'rate with the Moor.

Zara. I've heard her charity did once extend
So far to visit him at his request.

Gon. Ha!

King. How! she visit Osmyn! What! my daughter?

Sel. Madam, take heed; or you have ruin'd all.

Zara. And after did solicit you on his
Behalf——

King. Never. You have been misinform'd.

Zara. Indeed! Then 'twas a whisper spread by some
Who wish'd it so; a common art in courts.
I will retire, and instantly prepare
Instruction for my ministers of death.

SCENE VI.

KING and GONSALEZ.

Gon. There's somewhat yet of mystery in this;
Her words and actions are obscure and double,
Sometimes concur, and sometimes disagree;
I like it not.

King. What dost thou think, Gonzalez?
Are we not much indebted to this fair one?

Gon. I am a little slow of credit, Sir,
In the sincerity of women's actions.
Methinks this lady's hatred to the Moor
Disquiets her too much, which makes it seem
As if she'd rather that she did not hate him.

I wish her mutes are meant to be employed
As she pretends — I doubt it now — Your guards
Corrupted! How? by whom? who told her so?
I' th' evening Osmyn was to die; at midnight,
She begg'd the royal signet to release him;
I' th' morning he must die again; ere noon
Her mutes alone must strangle him, or he'll
Escape. This put together suits not well.

King. Yet that there's truth in what she has discover'd
Is manifest from every circumstance.

This tumult and the lords who fled with Heli
Are confirmation — that Alphonso lives
Agrees expressly too with her report.

Gon. I grant it, Sir; and doubt not but in rage
Of jealousy she has discover'd what
She now repents. It may be I'm deceiv'd.
But why that needless caution of the Princess?
What if she had seen Osmyn? tho' twere strange;
But if she had, what was't to her? unless
She fear'd her stronger charms might cause the Moor's
Affection to revolt.

King. I thank thee, friend.
There's reason in thy doubt, and I am warn'd.
But think'st thou that my daughter saw this Moor?

Gon. If Osmyn be, as Zara hath related,
Alphonso's friend, 'tis not impossible
But she might wish, on his account, to see him.

King. Say'st thou? by Heaven thou hast rous'd a thought,
That like a sudden earthquake shakes my frame;
Confusion! then my daughter's an accomplice,
And plots in private with this hellish Moor.

Gon. That were too hard a thought — but see she
comes —

'Twere not amiss to question her a little,
And try, however, if I've divin'd aright:
If what I fear be true, she'll be concern'd
For Osmyn's death, as he's Alphonso's friend.
Urge that, to try, if she'll solicit for him.

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SCENE VII.

KING, GONSALEZ, ALMERIA, LEONORA.

King. Your coming has prevented me, *Almeria*,
I had determin'd to have sent for you.
Let your attendant be dismiss'd; I have [*Leon. retires.*]
To talk with you. Come near: why dost thou shake?
What mean those swell'd and red-heck'd eyes, that look
As they had wept in blood, and worn the night
In waking anguish? Why this on the day
Which was design'd to celebrate your nuptials?
But that the beams of light are to be stain'd
With reeking gore from traitors on the rack?
Wherefore I have deferr'd the marriage-rites,
Nor shall the guilty horrors of this day
Profane that jubilee.

Alm. All days to me
Henceforth are equal; this the day of death,
To-morrow, and the next, and each that follows,
Will undistinguish'd roll, and but prolong
One hated line of more extended woe.

King. Whence is thy grief? Give me to know the
cause,

And look thou answer me with truth, for know
I am not unacquainted with thy falsehood:
Why art thou mute? base and degenerate maid!

Gon. Dear Madam, speak, or you'll incense the King.

Alm. What is't to speak? or wherefore should I
speak?

What mean these tears but grief unutterable?

King. They are the dumb confessions of thy mind;
They mean thy guilt, and say thou wert confederate
With damn'd conspirators to take my life.
O impious parricide! now canst thou speak?

Alm. O Earth, behold, I kneel upon thy bosom,
And bend my flowing eyes to stream upon
Thy face, imploring thee that thou wouldst yield;
Open thy bowels of compassion, take
Into thy womb the last and most forlorn

Of all thy race. Hear me, thou common parent;—
 I have no parent else—be thou a mother,
 And step between me and the curse of him
 Who was—who was, but is no more a father,
 But brands my innocence with horrid crimes,
 And, for the tender names of child and daughter,
 Now calls me murderer and parricide.

King. Rise, I command thee—and if thou would'st
 now

Acquit thyself of these detested names,
 Swear thou hast never seen that foreign dog,
 Now doom'd to die, that most accursed Osmyn.

Alm. Never but as with innocence I might,
 And free of all bad purposes: so Heav'n's
 My witness.

King. Vile equivocating wretch!
 With innocence! O patience! hear—she owns it,
 Confesses it! By Heav'n I'll have him rack'd,
 Torn, mangled, flay'd, impal'd—all pains and
 tortures

That wit of man and dire revenge can think,
 Shall he, accumulated, underbear.

Alm. Oh, I am lost! there Fate begins to wound.

King. Hear me, then, if thou can'st reply; know,
 traitress,

I'm not to learn that curs'd Alphonso lives;
 Nor am I ignorant what Osmyn is—

Alm. Then all is ended, and we both must die,
 Since thou'rt reveal'd, alone thou shalt not die.
 And yet alone wou'd I have died, Heav'n knows,
 Repeated deaths, rather than have reveal'd thee.
 Yes, all my father's wounding wrath, tho' each
 Reproach cuts deeper than the keenest sword,
 And cleaves my heart, I wou'd have borne it all,
 Nay, all the pains that are prepar'd for thee;
 To the remorseless rack I wou'd have giv'n.

This weak and tender flesh, to have been bruise'd
 And torn, rather than have reveal'd thy being.

King. Hell, hell! do I hear this, and yet endure!
 What, dar'st thou to my face avow thy guilt?

Hence, ere I curse—fly my just rage with speed,
Left I forget us both, and spurn thee from me.

Alm. And yet a father! think I am your child;
Turn not your eyes away—look on me kneeling;
Now curse me if you can, now spurn me off.

Did ever father curse his kneeling child?

Never: for always blessings crown that posture.

Nature inclines, and half way meets that duty,

Stooping to raise from earth the filial reverence,

For bending knees returning folding arms,

With pray'rs, and blessings, and paternal love.

O hear me then, thus crawling on the earth—

King. Be thou advis'd, and let me go while yet

The light impression thou hast made remains.

Alm. No, never will I rise, nor loose this hold,

'Till you are mov'd, and grant that he may live.

King. Ha! who may live? take heed, no more of

that,

For on my soul he dies, though thou and I

And all shou'd follow to partake his doom.

Away, off, let me go—Call her attendants.

[*Leonora and women retire.*]

Alm. Drag me, harrow the earth with my bare
bosom,

I'll not let go 'till you have spar'd my husband.

King. Ha! what say'st thou? Husband! Husband!

Damnation!

What husband? which? who?

Alm. He, he is my husband.

King. Poison and daggers! who?

Alm. O——— [Faints.]

Gon. Help, support her.

Alm. Let me go, let me fall, sink deep—I'll dig,

I'll dig a grave, and tear up death; I will;

I'll scrape 'till I collect his rotten bones,

And clothe their nakedness with my own flesh;

Yes, I will strip off life, and we will change!

I will be death; then though you kill my husband

He shall be mine, still and for ever mine.

King. What husband? who? whom dost thou mean?

Gon. She raves!

Alm. O that I did! Osmyn, he is my husband.

King. Osmyn?

Alm. Not Osmyn, but Alphonso, is my dear
And wedded husband—Heav'n, and air, and seas,
Ye winds and waves, I call you all to witness!

King. Wilder than winds or waves thyself dost rave.
Shou'd I hear more I too shou'd catch thy madness.

Yet somewhat she must mean of dire import,
Which I'll not hear till I am more at peace.

Watch her returning sense, and bring me word:
And look that she attempt not on her life.

S C E N E VIII.

ALMERIA, GONSALEZ, LEONORA, Attendants.

Alm. O stay, yet stay; hear me, I am not mad.
I wou'd to Heav'n I were!—He's gone.

Gon. Have comfort.

Alm. Curs'd be that tongue that bids me be of
comfort;

Curs'd my own tongue, that could not move his pity;
Curs'd these weak hands, that could not hold him here;
For he is gone to doom Alphonso's death.

Gon. Your too excessive grief works on your fancy
And deludes your sense. Alphonso, if living,
Is far from hence, beyond your father's pow'r.

Alm. Hence, thou detested, ill-tim'd flatterer!
Source of my woes: thou and thy race be curs'd;
But doubly thou, who couldst alone have policy
And fraud to find the fatal secret out,
And know that Osmyn was Alphonso.

Gon. Ha!

Alm. Why dost thou start? What dost thou see
or hear?

Is it the doleful bell tolling for death?

Or dying groans from my Alphonso's breast?

See, see, look yonder! where a grizzled, pale,

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And ghastly head glares by, all lined with blood,
Gasping as it would speak; and after, see!
Behold a damp dead hand has drop'd a dagger:
I'll catch it—Hark! a voice cries murder! ah!
My father's voice! hollow it sounds, and calls
Me from the tomb—I'll follow it, for there
I shall again behold my dear Alphonso.

SCENE IX.

GONSALEZ alone.

Gon. She's greatly griev'd, nor am I less surpris'd.
Osmyn Alphonso! no; she over-rates
My policy; I ne'er suspected it,
Nor now had known it but for her mistake.
Her husband too! Ha! Where's my Garcia then?
And where the crown that shou'd descend on him,
To grace the line of my posterity?
Hold, let me think,—if I should tell the King—
Things come to this extremity, his daughter
Wedded already—what if he should yield,
Knowing no remedy for what is past,
And urg'd by Nature pleading for his child,
With which he seems to be already shaken?
And tho' I know he hates beyond the grave
Anselmo's race, yet if—that if concludes me;
To doubt, when I may be assur'd, is folly.
But how prevent the captive Queen, who means
To set him free? Ay, now 'tis plain. O well
Invented tale. He was Alphonso's friend.
This subtle woman will amuse the King
If I delay—'Twill do—or better so.
One to my wish. Alonzo, thou art welcome.

SCENE X.

GONSALEZ, ALONZO.

Alon. The King expects your Lordship.

Gon. 'Tis no matter;
I'm not i' the way at present, good Alonzo.

Alon. If't please your Lordship I'll return and say
I have not seen you.

Gon. Do, my best Alonzo;
Yet stay, I would—but go; anon will serve:
Yet I have that requires thy speedy help.
I think thou wou'd'st not stop to do me service.

Alon. I am your creature.

Gon. Say, thou art my friend.
I've seen thy sword do noble execution.

Alon. All that it can your Lordship shall command.

Gon. Thanks, and I take thee at thy word; thou'rt seen,
Amongst the followers of the captive Queen,
Dumb men who make their meaning known by signs.

Alon. I have, my Lord.

Gon. Could'st thou procure, with speed
And privacy, the wearing garb of one
Of those, though purchas'd by his death, I'd give
Thee such reward as thou'd exceed thy wish.

Alon. Conclude it done. Where shall I wait your
Lordship?

Gon. At my apartment. Use thy utmost diligence,
And say I've not been seen—haste, good Alonzo.
So, this can hardly fail. Alphonso slain,
The greatest obstacle is then remov'd;

Almeria widow'd yet again may wed,
And I yet fix the crown on Garcia's head.

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Room of state.

KING, PEREZ, ALONZO.

KING.

NOT to be found? In an ill hour he's absent.
None, say you, none! What, not the favorite
eunuch,

Nor she herself, nor any of her mutes,
Have yet requir'd admittance?

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Per. None, my Lord.

King. Is Osmyn so dispos'd as I commanded?

Per. Fast bound in double chains, and at full length
He lyes supine on earth; with as much ease
She might remove the centre of this earth,
As loose the rivets of his bonds.

King. 'Tis well.

[A Mute appears, and seeing the King retires.]

Ha! stop and seize that Mute; Alonzo, follow him.
Ent'ring he met my eyes, and started back,
Frighted and fumbling, one hand in his bosom,
As to conceal th' importance of his errand.

[Alonzo follows him, and returns with a paper.]

Alon. A bloody proof of obstinate fidelity!

King. What dost thou mean?

Alon. Soon as I seiz'd the man,
He snatch'd from out his bosom this—and strove,
With rash and greedy haste, at once to cram
The morsel down his throat. I catch'd his arm,
And hardly wrench'd his hand to wring it from him;
Which done, he drew a poniard from his side,
And on the instant plung'd it in his breast.

King. Remove the body thence ere Zara see it.

Alon. I'll be so bold to borrow his attire,
'Twill quit me of my promise to Gonfalez.

S C E N E II.

KING and PEREZ.

Per. Whate'er it is, the King's complexion turns.

King. How's this? My mortal foe beneath my roof?
[Having read the letter.]

O give me patience, all ye Pow'rs! no, rather
Give me new rage, implacable revenge,
And trebled fury——Ha, who's there?

Per. My Lord.

King. Hence, slave! how dar'st thou 'bide to watch
and pry
Into how poor a thing a king descends,

How like thyself, when passion treads him down?
 Ha! stir not, on thy life; for thou wert fix'd
 And planted here to see me gorge this bait,
 And lash against the hook. — By Heav'n you're all
 Rank traitors; thou art with the rest combin'd;
 Thou knew'st that Osmyn was Alphonso, knew'st
 My daughter privately with him conferr'd;
 And wert the spy and pander to their meeting.

Per. By all that's holy I'm amaz'd —

King. Thou liest.

Thou art accomplice too with Zara; here
 Where she sets down — *Still will I set thee free —*

[*Reading.*

That somewhere is repeated — *I have pow'r*
O'er them that are thy guards. — Mark that, thou traitor.

Per. It was your Majesty's command I should
 Obey her order.

King reading.] — *And still will I set*
Thee free, Alphonso. — Hell! curs'd, curs'd Alphonso!
 False and perfidious Zara! Strumpet daughter!
 Away, be gone, thou feeble boy, fond Love!
 All nature, softness, pity and compassion,
 This hour I throw ye off, and entertain
 Fell hate within my breast, revenge and gall.
 By Heav'n, I'll meet, and counterwork this treachery.
 Hark thee, villain, traitor — answer me, slave.

Per. My service has not merited those titles.

King. Dar'st thou reply? Take that. — Thy service!
 — *thine!* [Strikes him,

What's thy whole life, thy soul, thy all, to my
 One moment's ease? Hear my command, and look
 That thou obey, or horror on thy head.
 Drench me thy dagger in Alphonso's heart.
 Why dost thou start? Resolve, or —

Per. Sir, I will.

King. 'Tis well — that when she comes to set him free,
 His teeth may grin, and mock at her remorse.

[*Perez going.*

— Stay thee — I've farther thought — I'll add to this,
 And give her eyes yet greater disappointment:

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When thou hast ended him bring me his robe,
And let the cell where she'll expect to see him
Be darken'd, so as to amuse the sight;
I'll be conducted thither—mark me well—
There with his turban and his robe array'd,
And laid along, as he now lyes, supine,
I shall convict her, to her face, of falsehood.
When for Alphonso's she shall take my hand,
And breathe her sighs upon my lips for his,
Sudden I'll start, and dash her with her guilt.
But see, she comes; I'll shun th' encounter: thou
Follow me, and give heed to my direction.

S C E N E III.

ZARA and SELIM.

Zara. The mute not yet return'd! Ha! 'twas the King,
The King that parted hence; frowning he went:
His eyes like meteors roll'd, then darted down
Their red and angry beams, as if his sight
Would, like the raging dog-star, scorch the earth,
And kindle ruin in its course. Dost think
He saw me?

Sel. Yes: but then, as if he thought
His eyes had err'd, he hastily recall'd
Th' imperfect look, and sternly turn'd away.

Zara. Shun me when seen! I fear thou hast undone me.
Thy shallow artifice begets suspicion,
And, like a cobweb-veil, but thinly shades
The face of thy design, alone disguising
What shou'd have ne'er been seen. Imperfect mischief!
Thou, like the adder, venomous and deaf,
Hast stung the traveller, and after hear'st
Not his pursuing voice; ev'n where thou think'st
To hide, the rustling leaves and bended grass
Confess, and point the path which thou hast crept.
O fate of fools, officious in contriving,
In executing puzzled, lame and lost.

Sel. Avert it, Heav'n, that you should ever suffer

For my defect, or that the means which I
 Devis'd to serve should ruin your design !
 Prescience is Heav'n's alone, not giv'n to man.
 If I have fail'd in what, as being man,
 I needs must fail, impute not as a crime
 My nature's want, but punish nature in me :
 I plead not for a pardon, and to live,
 But to be punish'd and forgiv'n. Here, strike ;
 I bare my breast to meet your just revenge.

Zara. I have not leisure now to take so poor
 A forfeit as thy life ; somewhat of high
 And more important fate requires my thought.
 When I've concluded on myself, if I
 Think fit, I'll leave thee my command to die.
 Regard me well, and dare not to reply
 To what I give in charge, for I'm resolv'd.
 Give order that the two remaining mutes
 Attend me instantly, with each a bowl
 Of such ingredients mix'd as will with speed
 Benumb the living faculties, and give
 Most easy and inevitable death.
 Yes, Osmyn, yes ! be Osmyn or Alphonso,
 I'll give thee freedom, if thou dar'st be free ;
 Such liberty as I embrace myself
 Thou shalt partake. Since Fates no more afford,
 I can but die with thee, to keep my word.

S C E N E IV.

SCENE opening shews the Prison.

GONSALEZ alone, disguis'd like a mute, with a dagger.

Gon. Nor centinel, nor guard ! the doors unbarr'd !
 And all as still as at the noon of night !
 Sure Death already has been busy here.
 There lyes my way, that door too is unlock'd. [*Looks in.*
 Ha ! sure he sleeps——All's dark within, save what
 A lamp, that feebly lifts a sickly flame,
 By fits reveals——His face seems turn'd, to favour

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Th' attempt; I'll steal, and do it unperceiv'd.
What noise! somebody coming? 'Is't Alonzo?
Nobody. Sure he'll wait without—I would
'Twere done—I'll crawl, and sting him to the heart,
Then cast my skin, and leave it there to answer it.

[Goes in.]

SCENE V.

GARCIA and ALONZO.

Gar. Where! where, Alonzo! where's my father?
where

The King? Confusion! all is on the rout!
All's lost, all's ruin'd by surprise and treachery.

Where, where is he? Why dost thou thus mislead me?

Alon. My Lord, he enter'd but a moment since,
And cou'd not pass me unperceiv'd—What, ho!
My Lord, my Lord, what, ho! my Lord Gonzalez.

SCENE VI.

GARCIA, ALONZO, GONSALEZ bloody.

Gon. Perdition choke your clamour!—Whence this
rudeness?

Garcia!

Gar. Perdition, slavery and death
Are ent'ring now our doors. Where is the King?
What means this blood? and why this face of horror?

Gon. No matter—give me first to know the cause
Of these your rash and ill-tim'd exclamations.

Gar. The eastern gate is to the foe betray'd,
Who, but for heaps of slain that choke the passage,
Had enter'd long ere now, and bore down all
Before 'em to the palace-walls. Unless
The King in person animate our men,
Granada's lost; and, to confirm this fear,
The traitor Perez, and the captive Moor,
Are thro' a postern fled, and join the foe.

Gon. Wou'd all were false as that; for whom you call

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The Moor, is dead. That Osmyn was Alphonso;
In whose heart's blood this poniard yet is warm.

Gar. Impossible; for Osmyn was, while flying,
Pronounc'd aloud by Perez for Alphonso.

Gon. Enter that chamber, and convince your eyes,
How much report has wrong'd your easy faith.

[Garcia goes in.]

Alon. My Lord, for certain truth Perez is fled;
And has declar'd the cause of his revolt
Was to revenge a blow the King had giv'n him.

Gar. returning.] Ruin and horror! O heart-wound-
ing fight!

Gon. What says my son? what ruin? ha! what horror?

Gar. Blasted my eyes, and speechless be my tongue,
Rather than or to see, or to relate.

This deed! ——— O dire mistake! O fatal blow!

The King! ———

Gon. Alon. The King!

Gar. Dead, welt'ring, drown'd in blood.

See, see, attir'd like Osmyn, where he lyes!

[They look in.]

O whence, or how, or wherefore was this done?

But what imports the manner or the cause!

Nothing remains to do, or to require,

But that we all should turn our swords against

Ourselves, and expiate, with our own, his blood.

Gon. O wretch! O curs'd, and rash, deluded fool!

On me, on me, turn your avenging sword.

I, who have spilt my royal master's blood,

Should make atonement by a death as horrid,

And fall beneath the hand of my own son.

Gar. Ha! what! atone this murder with a greater!

The horror of that thought has damp'd my rage.

The earth already groans to bear this deed;

Oppress her not, nor think to stain her face

With more unnatural blood. Murder my father!

Better with this to rip up my own bowels,

And bathe it, to the hilt, in far less damnable

Self-murder.

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Gon. O my son! from the blind dotage
Of a father's fondness all these ills arose!
For thee I've been ambitious, base and bloody;
For thee I've plung'd into this sea of sin,
Stemming the tide with only one weak hand,
While t'other bore the crown, (to wreathe thy brow),
Whose weight has sunk me ere I reach'd the shore.

Gar. Fatal ambition! Hark! the foe is enter'd:
[Shout.

The shrillness of that shout speaks 'em at hand.
We have no time to search into the cause
Of this surprising and most fatal error.
What's to be done? the King's death known would
Strike

The few remaining soldiers with despair,
And make 'em yield to mercy of the conqueror.

Alon. My Lord, I've thought how to conceal the body;
Require me not to tell the means till done,
Lest you forbid what then you may approve.

[Goes in. Shout.

Gon. They shout again! whate'er he means to do
'Twere fit the soldiers were amus'd with hopes,
And in the mean time fed with expectation
To see the King in person at their head:

Gar. Were it a truth, I fear 'tis now too late.
But I'll omit no care nor haste, and try
Or to repel their force, or bravely die.

S C E N E VII.

GONSALEZ, ALONZO.

Gon. What hast thou done, Alonzo?

Alon. Such a deed

As but an hour ago I'd not have done.
Tho' for the crown of universal empire,
But what are kings reduc'd to common clay?
Or who can wound the dead?—I've from the body
Sever'd the head, and in an obscure corner
Dispos'd it, muffled in the mute's attire,

Leaving to view of them who enter next
 Alone the undistinguishable trunk,
 Which may be still mistaken by the guards
 For Osmyn, if in seeking for the King
 They chance to find it.

Gon. 'Twas an act of horror,
 And of a piece with this day's dire misdeeds.
 But 'tis no time to ponder or repent.
 Haste thee, Alonzo, haste thee hence with speed,
 To aid my son. I'll follow with the last
 Reserve, to reinforce his arms; at least
 I shall make good, and shelter his retreat.

S C E N E VIII.

ZARA followed by SELIM, and two Mutes bearing the bowls.

Zara. Silence and solitude are ev'ry where!
 Thro' all the gloomy ways and iron doors,
 That hither lead, nor human face nor voice
 Is seen or heard. A dreadful din was wont
 To grate the sense, when enter'd here, from groans
 And howls of slaves condemn'd, from clink of chains
 And crash of rusty bars and creaking hinges:
 And ever and anon the fight was dash'd
 With frightful faces, and the meagre looks
 Of grim and ghastly executioners;
 Yet more this stillness terrifies my soul
 Than did that scene of complicated horrors.
 It may be that the cause of this my errand
 And purpose, being chang'd from life to death,
 Has wrought this chilling change of temper.
 Or does my heart bode more? What can it more
 Than death?
 Let 'em set down the bowls, and warn Alphonso
 That I am here—So. You return and find
 [Mutes going in.
 The King; tell him what he requir'd I've done,
 And wait his coming to approve the deed.

S C E N E IX.

ZARA and Mutes.

Zara. What have you seen? Ha! wherefore stare you thus, [The Mutes return, and look affrighted.]
With haggard eyes? Why are your arms across,
Your heavy and desponding heads hung down?
Why is't you more than speak in these sad signs?
Give me more ample knowledge of this mourning.

[They go to the scene, which opening, Zara perceives the body.]

Ha! prostrate! bloody! headless! O—I'm lost!
O Osmyn! O Alphonso! cruel fate!
Cruel, cruel, O more than killing object!
I came prepar'd to die, and see thee die——
Nay, came prepar'd myself to give thee death——
But cannot bear to find thee thus, my Osmyn——
O this accurs'd, this base, this treach'rous King!

S C E N E X.

ZARA and SELIM.

Sel. I've sought in vain, for no where can the King
Be found——

Zara. Get thee to hell, and seek him there. [Stabs him.]
His hellish rage had wanted means to act,
But for thy fatal and pernicious counsel.

Sel. You thought it better then—but I'm rewarded.
The mute you sent, by some mischance, was seen,
And forc'd to yield your letter with his life;
I found the dead and bloody body stript——
My tongue falters, and my voice fails—I sink——
Drink not the poison——for Alphonso is—— [Dies.]

Zara. As thou art now—and I shall quickly be,
'Tis not that he is dead, for 'twas decreed
We both should die; nor is't that I survive;
I have a certain remedy for that;
But, oh! he died unknowing in my heart.

He knew I lov'd, but knew not to what height,
 Nor that I meant to fall before his eyes,
 A martyr and a victim to my vows :
 Insensible of this last proof he's gone.
 Yet Fate alone can rob his mortal part
 Of sense ; his soul still sees and knows each purpose,
 And fix'd event of my persisting faith.
 Then wherefore do I pause?—Give me the bowl.

[A mute kneels and gives one of the bowls.]

Hover a moment yet, thou gentle spirit,
 Soul of my love, and I will wait thy flight.
 This to our mutual bliss when join'd above. *[Drinks.]*
 O friendly draught! already in my heart!
 Cold, cold; my veins are icicles and frost.
 I'll creep into his bosom; lay me there;
 Cover us close—or I shall chill his breast,
 And fright him from my arms.—See, see he slides
 Still farther from me. Look, he hides his face;
 I cannot feel it.—Quite beyond my reach,
 O now he's gone, and all is dark—— *[Dies.]*

[The mutes kneel and mourn over her.]

S C E N E XI.

ALMERIA, LEONORA, MUTES, &c.

Alm. O let me seek him in this horrid cell,
 For in the tomb or prison I alone
 Must hope to find him.

Leon. Heav'ns! what dismal scene
 Of death is this! the eunuch Selim slain!

Alm. Shew me, for I am come in search of Death,
 But want a guide, for tears have dimm'd my sight.

Leon. Alas, a little farther, and behold
 Zara all pale and dead! two frightful men,
 Who seem the murderers, kneel, weeping by,
 Feeling remorse too late for what they've done.
 But, O forbear—lift up your eyes no more,
 But haste away; fly from this fatal place
 Where miseries are multiply'd; return,

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Return and look not on ; for there's a dagger want
Ready to stab the sight, and make your eyes
Rain blood——

Alm. O, I foreknow, foresee that object.
Is it at last then so ? Is he then dead ?
What ! dead at last, quite, quite, for ever dead ?
There, there I see him ; there he lyes, the blood
Yet bubbling from his wounds.—O more than savage !

Had they or hearts or eyes that did this deed ?
Could eyes endure to guide such cruel hands ?
Are not my eyes guilty alike with theirs,
That thus can gaze, and yet not turn to stone ?——

I do not weep ! the springs of tears are dry'd,
And of a sudden I am calm as if
All things were well : and yet my husband's murder'd !
Yes, yes, I know to mourn ! I'll stife this heart,
The source of woe, and let the torrent loose.——

Those men have left to weep, they look on me !
I hope they murder all on whom they look.
Behold me well ; your bloody hands have err'd,
And wrongfully have slain those innocents :
I am the sacrifice design'd to bleed,
And come prepar'd to yield my throat—They shake
Their heads, in sign of grief and innocence !

[They point at the bowl on the ground.]

And point ! What mean they ? Ha ! a cup ! O well
I understand what med'cine has been here.
O noble thirst ! yet greedy to drink all——
O for another draught of death——What mean they ?

[They point at the other cup.]

Ha ! point again ? 'Tis there, and fall, I hope.
Thanks to the lib'ral hand that fill'd thee thus,
I'll drink my glad acknowledgment——

Leon. O hold,
For Mercy's sake ; upon my knee I beg.——

Alm. With thee the kneeling world should beg in vain.
Seest thou there ? Behold who prostrate lyes,
And pleads against thee ! Who shall then prevail ?
Yet I will take a cold and parting leave

From his pale lips; I'll kiss him ere I drink,
 Lest the rank juice should blister on my mouth,
 And stain the colour of my last adieu.
 Horror! a headless trunk! nor lips nor face,
 [Coming nearer the body, starts, and lets fall the cup:
 But spouting veins and mangled flesh! O, oh!

S C E N E *The last.*

ALMERIA, LEONORA, ALPHONSO, HELI, PEREZ,
 with GARCIA prisoner; Guards and Attendants.

Alph. Away, stand off, where is she? let me fly,
 Save her from death, and snatch her to my heart.

Alm. Oh!

Alph. Forbear; my arms alone shall hold her up;
 Warm her to life, and wake her into gladness.
 O let me talk to thy reviving sense
 The words of joy and peace, warm thy cold beauties:
 With the new-flushing ardor of my cheek;
 Into thy lips pour the soft trickling balm
 Of cordial sighs, and reinspire thy bosom
 With the breath of love. Shine, awake, Almeria,
 Give a new birth to thy long-shaded eyes,
 Then double on the day reflected light.

Alm. Where am I? Heav'n! what does this dream
 intend?

Alph. O mayst thou never dream of less delight;
 Nor ever wake to less substantial joys!

Alm. Giv'n me again from death! O all ye pow'rs,
 Confirm this miracle! Can I believe
 My sight against my sight? and shall I trust
 That sense which in one instant shews him dead
 And living? Yes, I will; I've been abus'd
 With apparitions and affrighting phantoms:
 This is my Lord, my life, my only husband,
 I have him now, and we no more will part.
 My father too shall have compassion——

Alph. O my heart's comfort, 'tis not giv'n to this
 Frail life to be entirely blest'd. Ev'n now,

In this extremest joy my soul can taste,
Yet I am dash'd to think that thou must weep:
Thy father fell where he design'd my death.
Gonzalez and Alonzo both, of wounds
Expiring, have with their last breath confess'd
The just decree of Heav'n, which on themselves
Has turn'd their own most bloody purposes.
Nay, I must grant 'tis fit you should be thus——

[She weeps.]

Let 'em remove the body from her sight.
Ill-fated Zara! Ha! a cup! Alas!
The error then is plain! but I were flint
Not to o'erflow in tribute to thy memory.
O Garcia!
Whose virtue hast renounc'd thy father's crimes,
Seest thou how just the hand of Heav'n has been?
Let us, who through our innocence survive,
Still in the paths of honour persevere,
And not from past or present ills despair;
For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds.

[Exeunt omnes.]

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs BRACEGIRDLE.

THE tragedy thus done, I am, you know,
No more a princess, but in statu quo :
And now as unconcern'd this mourning wear,
As if indeed a widow, or an heir.
I've leisure now to mark your sev'ral faces,
And know each critic by his four grimaces.
To poison plays I see somewhere they sit,
Scatter'd, like ratsbane, up and down the pit;
While others watch, like parish-searchers, hir'd,
To tell of what disease the play expir'd.
O with what joy they run to spread the news
Of a damn'd poet and departed muse!
But if he 'scape, with what regrete they're seiz'd!
And how they're disappointed when they're pleas'd!
Critics to plays for the same end resort,
That surgeons wait on trials in a court :
For innocence condemn'd they've no respect,
Provided they've a body to dissect.
As Suffex men, that dwell upon the shore,
Look out when storms arise, and billows roar;
Devoutly praying, with uplifted hands,
That some well-laden ship may strike the sands,
To whose rich cargo they may make pretence,
And fatten on the spoils of Providence :

EPILOGUE.

*So critics throng to see a new play split,
And thrive and prosper on the wrecks of wit.
Small hope our Poet from these prospects draws,
And therefore to the Fair commends his cause.
Your tender hearts to mercy are inclin'd,
With whom he hopes this play will favour find,
Which was an off'ring to the sex design'd.*

}

END OF THE MOURNING BRIDE.

1774

and printed by J. B. Smith, at the
press of J. B. Smith, in the year 1774.

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THE
LONDON MERCHANT:
OR, THE
HISTORY
OF
GEORGE BARNWELL.

A
TRAGEDY.

BY
GEORGE LILLO.

To which is prefixed
The LIFE of the AUTHOR.

Learn to be wise by others harm,
And you shall do full well.

Old Ballad of the LADY'S FALL.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by and for MARTIN & WOTHERSPOON.

M. DCC. LXXIII.

Governor of the North-Sea Company,
Mayor of the City of London, and Sub-
Member of Parliament for, and Alder-

as kind.

I hope I shall not be thought to insinuate, that this
to which I have presumed to prefix your name, is such
that depends on its being to answer the end of necessity,
the exciting of the passions, in order to the correcting
such of them as are criminal, either in their nature, or
through their excess. Whether the following license
do this in any tolerable degree, is left to the determent
of one who would not I think be so easily deceived.



What I would inter is
That tragedy is so far from being
accommodated to the circumstances of the generality of
mankind, that it is more truly awful in proportion to
the extent of its influence, and the numbers that are
properly affected by it. As it is more truly great
as the instrument of good to many who stand in
need of our assistance, than to a very small part of
that number.

T O

Sir JOHN EYLES, Bart.

Member of Parliament for, and Alderman of, the city of London, and Sub-Governor of the South-Sea Company.

S I R,

IF tragic poetry be, as Mr Dryden has somewhere said, the most excellent and most useful kind of writing; the more extensively useful the moral of any tragedy is, the more excellent that piece must be of its kind.

I hope I shall not be thought to insinuate, that this, to which I have presumed to prefix your name, is such: that depends on its fitness to answer the end of tragedy, the exciting of the passions, in order to the correcting such of them as are criminal, either in their nature, or through their excess. Whether the following scenes do this in any tolerable degree, is, with the deference of one who would not be thought vain, submitted to your candid and impartial judgment.

What I would infer is this, I think; evident truth, That tragedy is so far from losing its dignity by being accommodated to the circumstances of the generality of mankind, that it is more truly august in proportion to the extent of its influence, and the numbers that are properly affected by it. As it is more truly great to be the instrument of good to many who stand in need of our assistance, than to a very small part of that number.

DEDICATION.

If princes, &c. were alone liable to misfortunes arising from vice or weakness in themselves or others, there would be good reason for confining the characters in tragedy to those of superior rank; but since the contrary is evident, nothing can be more reasonable than to proportion the remedy to the disease.

I am far from denying, that tragedies founded on any instructive and extraordinary events in history, or well-invented fables, where the persons introduced are of the highest rank, are without their use, even to the bulk of the audience. The strong contrast between a Tamerlane and a Bajazet may have its weight with an unsteady people, and contribute to the fixing of them in the interest of a prince of the character of the former; when, through their own levity, or the arts of designing men, they are rendered factious and uneasy, though they have the highest reason to be satisfied. The sentiments and example of a Cato may inspire his spectators with a just sense of the value of liberty, when they see that honest patriot prefer death to an obligation from a tyrant, who would sacrifice the constitution of his country, and the liberties of mankind to his ambition or revenge. I have attempted, indeed, to enlarge the province of the graver kind of poetry, and should be glad to see it carried on by some abler hand. Plays founded on moral tales in private life may be of admirable use, by carrying conviction to the mind, with such irresistible force as to engage all the faculties and powers of the soul in the cause of virtue, by stifling vice in its first principles. They who imagine this to be too much to be attributed to tragedy, must be strangers to the energy of that noble species of poetry. Shakespeare, who has given such amazing proofs of his genius, in that as well as in comedy, in his Hamlet, has the following lines:

*Had he the motives and the cause for passion
That I have, he would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty, and appall the free,*



DEDICATION.

*Confound the ign'rant, and amaze indeed
The very faculty of eyes and ears.*

And farther in the same speech;

I've heard, that guilty creatures at a play

Have, by the very cunning of the scene,

Been so struck to the soul, that presently as I

They have proclaim'd their malefactions.

Prodigious! yet strictly just. But I shall not take up your valuable time with my remarks: only give me leave just to observe, that he seems so firmly persuaded of the power of a well-written piece to produce the effect here ascribed to it, as to make Hamlet venture his soul on the event, and rather trust that, than a messenger from the other world, though it assumed, as he expresses it, his noble father's form, and assured him that it was his spirit. *I'll have, says Hamlet, grounds more relative.*

—The play's the thing,

Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.

Such plays are the best answers to them who deny the lawfulness of the stage.

Considering the novelty of this attempt, I thought it would be expected from me to say something in its excuse; and I was unwilling to lose the opportunity of saying something of the usefulness of tragedy in general, and what may be reasonably expected from the farther improvement of this excellent kind of poetry.

SIR,

I hope you will not think I have said too much of an art, a mean specimen of which I am ambitious enough to recommend to your favour and protection. A mind conscious of superior worth, as much despises flattery, as it is above it. Had I found in myself an inclination to so contemptible a vice, I should not have chosen Sir JOHN EYLES for my patron. And indeed the best written panegyric, though strictly true, must place you

in a light much inferior to that in which you have long been fixed, by the love and esteem of your fellow-citizens; whose choice of you for one of their representatives in parliament has sufficiently declared their sense of your merit. Nor hath the knowledge of your worth been confined to the city. The proprietors in the South-Sea company, in which are included numbers of persons as considerable for their rank, fortune, and understanding, as any in the kingdom, gave the greatest proof of their confidence in your capacity and probity, by chusing you sub-governor of their company, at a time when their affairs were in the utmost confusion, and their properties in the greatest danger. Neither is the Court insensible of your importance. I shall not therefore attempt a character so well known, nor pretend to add any thing to a reputation so well established.

Whatever others may think of a dedication, wherein there is so much said of other things, and so little of the person to whom it is addressed, I have reason to believe that you will the more easily pardon it on that very account. I am,

S. I R,

Your most obedient

Humble servant,

GEORGE LILLO.

T H E
L I F E

O F
M R G E O R G E L L O

THIS gentleman was by profession a jeweller, and was born in the neighbourhood of Moorgate in London, on the 4th of Feb: 1693, in which neighbourhood he pursued his occupation for many years with the fairest and most unblemished character.—He was bred up in the principles of the Protestant dissenters; but whatever might have been his religious tenets, he would have been an honour to any sect he had adhered to.—He was strongly attached to the Muses; yet seemed to have laid it down as a maxim, that the devotion paid to them ought always to tend to the promotion of virtue, morality and religion.—In the pursuance of this aim Mr Lillo was happy in the choice of his subjects, and shewed great power of affecting the heart, by working up the passions to such a height, as to render the distresses of common and domestic life equally interesting to the audiences as that of kings and heroes, and the ruin brought on private families by an indulgence of avarice, lust, &c. as the havoc made in states and empires, by ambition, cruelty or tyranny.—His *George Barnwell*, *Fatal Curiosity*, and *Arden of Feversham*, are all planned on common and well known stories; yet they have perhaps more frequently drawn tears from an audience, than the more pompous tragedies of *Alexander the Great*, *All for Love*, &c. particularly the first of them, which, being founded on a well known old ballad, many of the critics of that time, who went to the first representation of it, formed so contemptible an idea of the piece in their expectations, that they purchased the ballad, some thousands of which were used in one day on this account, in order to draw comparisons between that and the play.—But the merit of the

play soon got the better of this contempt, and presented them with scenes written so truly to the heart, that they were compelled to subscribe to the poet's power, and drop their ballads to take up their handkerchiefs.

Mr Lillo, as I before observed, has been happy in the choice of his subjects; his conduct in the management of them is no less meritorious, and his *pathos* very great.—If there is any fault to be objected to his writings, it is that sometimes he affects an elevation of style somewhat above the simplicity of his subject, and the supposed rank of his characters: but the custom of tragedy will stand in some degree of excuse for this; and a still better argument perhaps may be admitted in vindication, not only of our present Author, but of other writers in the like predicament, which is, that even nature itself will justify this conduct, since we find even the most humble characters of real life, when under peculiar circumstances of distress, or actuated by the influence of any violent passions, will at times be elevated to an aptness of expression, and power of language, not only greatly superior to themselves, but even to the general language of conversation of persons of much higher rank in life, and of minds more perfectly cultivated.

This Author died September 3, 1739, in the 47th year of his age, leaving behind him the character of a man of strict morals, great good-nature, and a sound understanding; and, what added a double lustre to all these perfections, endued with an uncommon share of modesty.—Whincop (or the compiler of the list of plays affixed to his *Scanderbeg*) has indeed spoke but slightly of his genius, on account of some little rivalry and pique subsisting between that gentleman and our Author, with respect to a tragedy of the latter's, entitled *The Christian Hero*, written on the same story with the *Scanderbeg* of the former.—Notwithstanding which, under the sanction not only of the success of his pieces, but also of the commendations bestowed on them by Mr Pope, and other indisputable judges, I shall venture to affirm that Mr Lillo is far from standing in the lowest rank of merit (however he may be ranged with respect to fame) among our dramatic writers.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr CREECH, junr.

THE tragic muse, sublime, delights to show
Princes distressed, and scenes of royal woe;
In awful pomp, majestic, to relate
The fall of nations, or some hero's fate:
That scepter'd chiefs may, by example, know
The strange vicissitude of things below;
What dangers on security attend;
How pride and cruelty in ruin end:
Hence Providence supreme to know, and own.
Humanity adds glory to a throne.

In ev'ry former age, and foreign tongue,
With native grandeur thus the Goddess sung.
Upon our stage, indeed, with wish'd success,
You've sometimes seen her in an humbler dress;
Great only in distress. When she complains
In Southern's, Rowe's, or Otway's moving strains,
The brilliant drops that fall from each bright eye,
The absent pomp, with brighter gems, supply.

Forgive us, then, if we attempt to show,
In artless strains, a tale of private woe.
A London 'prentice ruin'd is our theme,
Drawn from the fam'd old song that bears his name.
We hope your taste is not so high to scorn
A moral tale, esteem'd ere you were born;
Which, for a century of rolling years,
Has fill'd a thousand thousand eyes with tears.

If thoughtless youth to warn, and shame the age,
From vice destructive, well becomes the stage;
If this example innocence ensure,
Prevent our guilt, or by reflection cure;
If Millwood's dreadful crimes, and sad despair
Commend the virtue of the good and fair;
Though art be wanting, and our numbers fail,
Indulge us attempt in justice to the tale.

Dramatis Personæ.

THOROWGOOD.

BARNWELL, uncle to George.

GEORGE BARNWELL.

TRUEMAN.

BLUNT.

MARIA.

MILLWOOD.

LUCY.

Officers with their Attendants, Keeper, and Footman.

SCENE, London, and an adjacent Village.

THE
LONDON MERCHANT:

O R,
The History of *George Barnwell.*

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Room in Thorowgood's House.

Enter THOROWGOOD and TRUEMAN.

TRUEMAN.

SIR, the packet from Genoa is arrived. [*Gives letters.*
Thor. Heaven be prais'd! the storm that threatened our royal Mistress, pure religion, liberty, and laws, is for a time diverted: the haughty and revengeful Spaniard, disappointed of the loan on which he depended from Genoa, must now attend the slow returns of wealth from this new world to supply his empty coffers ere he can execute his proposed invasion of our happy island. By this means time is gain'd to make such preparations on our part, as may, Heaven concurring, prevent his malice, or turn the meditated mischief on himself.

True. He must be insensible indeed, who is not affected when the safety of his country is concern'd. Sir, may I know by what means?—if I am too bold——

Thor. Your curiosity is laudable, and I gratify it with the greater pleasure, because from thence you may learn how honest merchants, as such, may sometimes contribute to the safety of their country, as they do at all

12 The LONDON MERCHANT: or, ACT I.

times to its happiness; that if hereafter you should be tempted to any action that has the appearance of vice or meanness in it, upon reflecting on the dignity of our profession, you may, with honest scorn, reject whatever is unworthy of it.

True. Should Barnwell or I, who have the benefit of your example, by our ill conduct bring any imputation on that honourable name, we must be left without excuse.

Thor. You compliment, young man. [*Trueman bows respectfully.*] Nay, I am not offended. As the name of merchant never degrades the gentleman, so by no means does it exclude him; only take heed not to purchase the character of complaisance at the expence of your sincerity.—But to answer your question: The bank of Genoa had agreed, at an excessive interest, and on good security, to advance the King of Spain a sum of money, sufficient to equip his vast Armado; of which our peerless Elizabeth (more than in name the mother of her people) being well informed, sent Walsingham, her wise and faithful secretary, to consult the merchants of this loyal city, who all agreed to direct their several agents to influence, if possible, the Genoese to break their contract with the Spanish court. 'Tis done: the state and bank of Genoa, having maturely weighed, and rightly judged of their true interest, prefer the friendship of the merchants of London to that of a monarch who proudly styles himself *King of both Indies*.

True. Happy success of prudent counsels! What an expence of blood and treasure is here saved! Excellent Queen! O how unlike those princes, who make the danger of foreign enemies a pretence to oppress their subjects by taxes great and grievous to be borne!

Thor. Not so our gracious Queen! whose richest exchequer is her people's love, as their happiness her greatest glory.

True. On these terms to defend us, is to make our protection a benefit worthy her who confers it, and well worth our acceptance. Sir, have you any commands for me at this time?

Thor. Only look carefully over the files, to see whether there are any tradesmen's bills unpaid; if there are, send and discharge 'em. We must not let artificers lose their time, so useful to the public and their families, in unnecessary attendance. [*Exit Trueman.*]

Enter MARIA.

Well, Maria, have you given orders for the entertainment? I would have it in some measure worthy the guests. Let there be plenty, and of the best, that the courtiers may at least commend our hospitality.

Mar. Sir, I have endeavoured not to wrong your well-known generosity by an ill-tim'd parsimony.

Thor. Nay, it was a needless caution; I have no cause to doubt your prudence.

Mar. Sir, I find myself unfit for conversation; I should but increase the number of the company without adding to their satisfaction.

Thor. Nay, my child! this melancholy must not be indulged.

Mar. Company will but increase it; I wish you would excuse my absence. Solitude best suits my present temper.

Thor. You are not insensible that it is chiefly on your account these noble Lords do me the honour so frequently to grace my board: should you be absent, the disappointment may make them repent of their condescension, and think their labour lost.

Mar. He that shall think his time or honour lost in visiting you, can see no real value on your daughter's company, whose only merit is, that she is yours. The man of quality who chuses to converse with a gentleman and merchant of your worth and character, may confer honour by so doing, but he loses none.

Thor. Come, come, Maria, I need not tell you that a young gentleman may prefer your conversation to mine, and yet intend me no disrespect at all; for though he may lose no honour in my company, 'tis very natural for him to expect more pleasure in yours. I remember the time when the company of the greatest and

14 The LONDON MERCHANT: or A

wisest man in the kingdom would have been insipid and tiresome to me, if it had deprived me of an opportunity of enjoying your mother's.

Mar. Yours, no doubt, was as agreeable to her; for generous minds know no pleasure in society but where 'tis mutual.

Thor. Thou know'st I have no heir, no child, but thee; the fruits of many years successful industry must all be thine: now, it would give me pleasure, great as my love, to see on whom you will bestow it. I am daily solicited by men of the greatest rank and merit for leave to address you; but I have hitherto declined to give it, in hopes that, by observation, I should learn which way your inclination tends; for as I know love to be essential to happiness in the marriage state, I had rather my approbation should confirm your choice than direct it.

Mar. What can I say? How shall I answer as I ought, this tenderness, so uncommon even in the best of parents? But you are without example; yet, had you been less indulgent, I had been most wretched. That I look on the crowd of courtiers that visit here, with equal esteem, but equal indifference, you have observed, and I must needs confess; yet had you asserted your authority, and insisted on a parent's right to be obeyed, I had submitted, and to my duty sacrificed my peace.

Thor. From your perfect obedience in every other instance, I fear'd as much; and therefore would leave you without a bias in an affair wherein your happiness is so immediately concern'd.

Mar. Whether from a want of that just ambition that would become your daughter, or from some other cause, I know not; but I find high birth and titles don't recommend the man who owns them to my affections.

Thor. I would not that they should, unless his merit recommends him more. A noble birth and fortune, though they make not a bad man good, yet they are a real advantage to a worthy one, and place his virtues in the fairest light.

THE LONDON MERCHANT
ACT I. The HIST. of G. BARNWELL.

Mar. I cannot answer for my inclinations, but they shall ever be submitted to your wisdom and authority; and as you will not compel me to marry where I cannot love, love shall never make me act contrary to my duty. Sir, have I your permission to retire?

Thor. I'll see you to your chamber.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II.

A Room in Millwood's house.

MILLWOOD at her toilet: LUCY waiting.

Mill. How do I look to-day, Lucy?

Lucy. O killingly, Madam! A little more red, and you'll be irresistible!—But why this more-than-ordinary care of your dress and complexion? What new conquest are you aiming at?

Mill. A conquest would be new indeed!

Lucy. Not to you who make 'em every day—but to me—Well! 'tis what I am never to expect—unfortunate as I am!—But your wit and beauty—

Mill. First made me a wretch, and still continue me so. Men, however generous or sincere to one another, are all selfish hypocrites in their affairs with us. We are no otherwise esteemed or regarded by them, but as we contribute to their satisfaction!

Lucy. You are certainly, Madam, on the wrong side in this argument: Is not the expence all theirs? and I am sure it is our own fault if we han't our share of the pleasure.

Mill. We are but slaves to men.

Lucy. Nay, 'tis they that are slaves most certainly, for we lay them under contribution.

Mill. Slaves have no property; no, not even in themselves: all is the victor's.

Lucy. You are strangely arbitrary in your principles, Madam.

Mill. I would have my conquest complete, like those of the Spaniards in the New World, who first plundered the natives of all the wealth they had, and then condemn'd the wretches to the mines for life to work for more.

Lucy. Well, I shall never approve of your scheme of government; I should think it much more politic, as well as just, to find my subjects an easter employment.

Mill. 'Tis a general maxim among the knowing part of mankind, that a woman without virtue, like a man without honour or honesty, is capable of any action, though never so vile: and yet what pains will they not take, what arts not use, to seduce us from our innocence, and make us contemptible and wicked, even in their own opinion? Then is it not just the villains, to their cost, should find us so? But guilt makes them suspicious, and keeps them on their guard; therefore we can take advantage only of the young and innocent part of the sex, who having never injur'd women, apprehend no injury from them.

Lucy. Ay, they must be young indeed!

Mill. Such a one, I think, I have found. As I have pass'd through the city, I have often observ'd him receiving and paying considerable sums of money: from thence I conclude he is employed in affairs of consequence.

Lucy. Is he handsome?

Mill. Ay, ay, the stripling is well made, and has a good face.

Lucy. About—

Mill. Eighteen.

Lucy. Innocent, handsome, and about eighteen! You'll be vastly happy. Why, if you manage well you may keep him to yourself these two or three years.

Mill. If I manage well, I shall have done with him much sooner. Having long had a design on him, and meeting him yesterday, I made a full stop, and, gazing wistfully on his face, ask'd him his name. He bow'd, and bowing very low, answer'd, George Barnwell. I begg'd his pardon for the freedom I had taken, and told him, that he was the person I had long wish'd to see, and to whom I had an affair of importance to communicate, at a proper time and place. He nam'd a tavern; I talk'd of honour and reputation, and invited him to my house. He swallow'd the bait, promis'd to come, and this is the time I expect him.—

[Knocking at the door.] Somebody knocks.—D'ye hear? I am at home to nobody to-day, but him. [Exit Lucy.] Less affairs must give way to those of more consequence; and I am strangely mistaken if this does not prove of great importance to me, and him too, before I have done with him. Now after what manner shall I receive him? Let me consider.—What manner of person am I to receive? He is young, innocent, and bashful; therefore I must take care not to put him out of countenance at first. But then, if I have any skill in physiognomy, he is amorous; and, with a little assistance, will soon get the better of his modesty. I'll e'en trust to nature, who does wonders in these matters. If to seem what one is not, in order to be the better liked for what one really is; if to speak one thing, and mean the direct contrary, be art in a woman—I know nothing of nature.

Enter BARNWELL, bowing very low. LUCY at distance.

Mill. Sir! the surprize and joy!—

Barn. Madam!—

Mill. This is such a favour!—

[Advancing.]

Barn. Pardon me, Madam!—

Mill. So unhop'd for!

[Still advances.]

[Barnwell salutes her and retires in confusion.]

Mill. To see you here—Excuse the confusion.—

Barn. I fear I am too bold—

Mill. Alas! Sir! I may justly apprehend you think me so. Please, Sir, to sit. I am as much at a loss how to receive this honour as I ought, as I am surpris'd at your goodness in conferring it.

Barn. I thought you had expected me: I promised to come.

Mill. That is the more surprising; few men are such religious observers of their word.

Barn. All who are honest, are.

Mill. To one another; but we simple women are seldom thought of consequence enough to gain a place in their remembrance.

[Laying her hand on his, at by accident.]

Barn. Her disorder is so great, she don't perceive she has laid her hand on mine. Heav'ns! how she trembles! what can this mean! [*Aside.*]

Mill. The interest I have in all that relates to you, (the reason of which you shall know hereafter) excites my curiosity; and were I sure you would pardon my presumption, I should desire to know your real sentiments on a very particular subject.

Barn. Madam, you may command my poor thoughts on any subject: I have none that I would conceal.

Mill. You'll think me bold.

Barn. No, indeed.

Mill. What then are your thoughts of love?

Barn. If you mean the love of women, I have not thought of it at all: my youth and circumstances make such thoughts improper in me yet. But if you mean the general love we owe to mankind, I think no one has more of it in his temper than myself: I don't know that person in the world, whose happiness I don't wish, and would'n't promote, were it in my power. In an especial manner I love my uncle, and my master; but above all, my friend.

Mill. You have a friend then; whom you love?

Barn. As he does me, sincerely.

Mill. He is, no doubt, often blest'd with your company and conversation.

Barn. We live in one house, and both serve the same worthy merchant.

Mill. Happy, happy youth! whoe'er thou art, I envy thee, and so must all who see and know this youth. What have I lost, by being form'd a woman! I hate my sex, myself. Had I been a man, I might, perhaps, have been as happy in your friendship, as he who now enjoys it: But as it is—Oh!—

Barn. I never observ'd woman before, or this is, sure, the most beautiful of her sex. [*Aside.*] You seem disorder'd, Madam; may I know the cause?

Mill. Do not ask me—I can never speak it, whatever is the cause. I wish for things impossible: I would be a servant bound to the same master, to live in one house with you.

Barn. How strange, and yet how kind, her words and actions are! and the effect they have on me is as strange. I feel desires I never knew before. I must be gone while I have power to go. [*Aside.*] Madam, I humbly take my leave.

Mill. You will not, sure, leave me so soon!

Barn. Indeed I must.

Mill. You cannot be so cruel! I have prepar'd a poor supper, at which I promis'd myself your company.

Barn. I am sorry I must refuse the honour you design'd me: but my duty to my master calls me hence. I never yet neglected his service: he is so gentle and so good a master, that should I wrong him, though he might forgive me, I never should forgive myself.

Mill. Am I refused, by the first man, the second favour I ever stoop'd to ask? Go then, thou proud hard-hearted youth; but know, you are the only man that could be found, who would let me sue twice for greater favours.

Barn. What shall I do? How shall I go or stay?

Mill. Yet do not, do not leave me. I with my sex's pride would meet your scorn: but when I look upon you; when I behold those eyes—Oh! spare my tongue, and let my blushes—(this flood of tears to that will force its way) declare—what woman's modesty should hide.

Barn. Oh Heav'n! she loves me, worthless as I am. Her looks, her words, her flowing tears confess it. And can I leave her then? Oh! never, never. Madam, dry up your tears. You shall command me always; I will stay here for ever, if you wou'd have me.

Lucy. So! she has wheedled him out of his virtue of obedience already, and will strip him of all the rest, one after another, till she has left as few as her Ladyship, or myself. [*Aside.*]

Mill. Now you are kind, indeed; but I mean not to detain you always: I would have you shake off all slavish obedience to your master; but you may serve him still.

Lucy. Serve him still! Ay, or he'll have no opportunity of fingering this cash; and then he'll not serve your end, I'll be sworn. [*Aside.*]

Enter BLUNT.

Blunt. Madam, supper's on the table.

Mill. Come, Sir, you'll excuse all defects. My thoughts were too much employ'd on my guest to observe the entertainment. *[Exit Barnwell and Millwood.]*

Blunt. What! is all this preparation, this elegant supper, variety of wines, and music, for the entertainment of that young fellow?

Lucy. So it seems.

Blunt. How! is our mistress turn'd fool at last? She's in love with him, I suppose.

Lucy. I suppose not. But she designs to make him in love with her, if she can.

Blunt. What will she get by that? he seems under age, and can't be suppos'd to have much money.

Lucy. But his master has; and that's the same thing, as she'll manage it.

Blunt. I don't like this fooling with a handsome young fellow; while she's endeavouring to ensnare him, she may be caught herself.

Lucy. Nay, were she like me, that would certainly be the consequence; for, I confess, there is something in youth and innocence that moves me mightily.

Blunt. Yes, so does the smoothness and plumpness of a partridge move a mighty desire in the hawk to be the destruction of it.

Lucy. Why, birds are their prey, as men are ours; though, as you observ'd, we are sometimes caught ourselves. But that, I dare say, will never be the case of our mistress.

Blunt. I wish it may not prove so; for you know we all depend upon her: should she trifle away her time with a young fellow that there's nothing to be got by, we must all starve.

Lucy. There's no danger of that; for I am sure she has no view in this affair, but interest.

Blunt. Well, and what hopes are there of success in that?

Lucy. The most promising that can be. 'Tis true, the

ACT I. The HISTORY OF G. BARNWELL. 21

youth has his scruples ; but she'll soon teach him to answer them, by stifling his conscience. O! the lad is in a hopeful way, depend upon't!

[Exeunt.]
SCENE draws, and discovers BARNWELL and MILL-
WOOD at supper. An Entertainment of Music and
Singing. After which they come forward.

Barn. What can I answer? All that I know is, that you are fair, and I am miserable.

Mill. We are both so, and yet the fault is in ourselves.

Barn. To ease our present anguish by plunging into guilt, is to buy a moment's pleasure with an age of pain.

Mill. I should have thought the joys of love as lasting as they are great ; if ours prove otherwise, 'tis your inconstancy must make them so.

Barn. The law of Heaven will not be revers'd, and that requires us to govern our passions.

Mill. To give us sense of beauty and desires, and yet forbid us to taste and be happy, is a cruelty to nature: have we passions only to torment us?

Barn. To hear you talk, tho' in the cause of vice; to gaze upon your beauty, press your hand, and see your snow-white bosom heave and fall, inflames my wishes; my pulse beats high; my senses all are in a hurry, and I am on the rack of wild desire! — Yet for a moment's guilty pleasure, shall I lose my innocence, my peace of mind, and hopes of solid happiness?

Mill. Chimeras all! come on with me and prove
No joys like woman kind, no heav'n like Love.

Barn. I would not — yet must on —
Reluctant thus the Merchant quits his ease,
And trusts to rocks and sands, and stormy seas;
In hopes some unknown golden coast to find,
Commits himself, tho' doubtful, to the wind,
Longs much for joys to come — yet mourns those
left behind.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE I.

*A Room in Thorowgood's House.**Enter BARNWELL.*

BARNWELL.

HOW strange are all things round me! like some thief who treads forbidden ground, and fain would lurk unseen, fearful I enter each apartment of this well known house. To guilty Love, as if that were too little, already have I added breach of trust. — A thief! — Can I know myself that wretched thing, and look my honest friend and injured master in the face? Tho' hypocrisy may a while conceal my guilt, at length it will be known, and public shame and ruin must ensue. In the mean time, what must be my life? Ever to speak a language foreign to my heart; hourly to add to the number of my crimes, in order to conceal 'em. Sure such was the condition of the grand Apostate, when first he lost his purity: like me, disconsolate, he wandered; and while yet in Heav'n, bore all his future hell about him.

Enter TRUEMAN.

True. Barnwell! — Oh how I rejoice to see you safe! so will our master and his gentle daughter, who, during your absence, often enquired after you.

Barn. Wou'd he were gone! his officious love will pry into the secrets of my soul.

True. Unless you knew the pain the whole family has felt on your account, you can't conceive how much you are belov'd. But why thus cold and silent? When my heart is full of joy for your return, why do you turn away? why thus avoid me? what have I done? how am I alter'd since you saw me last? or rather, what have you done? and why are you thus chang'd? for I am still the same.

Barn. What have I done indeed ! [*Aside.*

True. Not speak ? — nor look upon me ! —

Barn. By my face he will discover all I would conceal ; methinks already I begin to hate him. [*Aside.*

True. I cannot bear this usage from a friend ; one whom till now I ever found so loving ; whom yet I love, though his unkindness strikes at the root of friendship, and might destroy it in any breast but mine.

Barn. I am not well ; [*Turning to him.*] Sleep has been a stranger to these eyes since you beheld them last.

True. Heavy they look indeed, and swoln with tears ; — now they overflow. Rightly did my sympathizing heart forbode last night, when thou wast absent, something fatal to our peace.

Barn. Your friendship engages you too far. My troubles, whate'er they are, are mine alone ; you have no interest in them, nor ought your concern for me to give you a moment's pain.

True. You speak as if you knew of friendship nothing but the name. Before I saw your grief, I felt it. Since we parted last I have slept no more than you, but pensive in my chamber sat alone, and spent the tedious night in wishes for your safety and return ; even now, though ignorant of the cause, your sorrows wound me to the heart.

Barn. 'Twill not be always thus. Friendship and all engagements cease, as circumstances and occasions vary ; and since you once may hate me, perhaps it might be better for us both, that now you lov'd me less.

True. Sure I but dream ! Without a cause would Barnwell use me thus ? Ungenerous and ungrateful Youth, farewell ; I shall endeavour to follow your advice. [*Going.*] Yet stay, perhaps, I am too rash, and angry when the cause demands compassion. Some unforeseen calamity may have befall'n him too great to bear.

Barn. What part am I reduced to act ! 'Tis vile and base to move his temper thus, the best of friends and men.

True. I am to-blame, pr'ythee forgive me, Barnwell.

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Try to compose your ruffled mind, and let me know the cause that thus transports you from yourself; my friendly counsel may restore your peace.

Barn. All that is possible for man to do for man, your generous friendship may effect; but here even that's in vain.

True. Something dreadful is labouring in your breast; O give it vent, and let me share your grief; 'twill ease your pain, should it admit no cure, and make it lighter by the part I bear.

Barn. Vain supposition! my woes increase by being observ'd; should the cause be known, they would exceed all bounds.

True. So well I know thy honest heart, guilt cannot harbour there.

Barn. O torture insupportable! [*Aside.*

True. Then why am I excluded? have I a thought I would conceal from you?

Barn. If still you urge me on this hated subject, I'll never enter more beneath this roof, nor see your face again.

True. 'Tis strange——but I have done, say but you hate me not.

Barn. Hate you! I am not that monster yet.

True. Shall our friendship still continue?

Barn. It's a blessing I never was worthy of; yet now must stand on terms, and but upon conditions can confirm it.

True. What are they?

Barn. Never hereafter, though you should wonder at my conduct, desire to know more than I am willing to reveal.

True. 'Tis hard, but upon any conditions I must be your friend.

Barn. Then, as much as one lost to himself can be another's, I am your's. [*Embracing.*

True. Be ever so, and may Heaven restore your peace!

Barn. Will yesterday return? We have heard the glorious sun, that 'till then incessant roll'd, once stopp'd his rapid course, and once went back: the dead have

risen: and parch'd rocks pour'd forth a liquid stream
to quench a people's thirst: the sea divided, and form'd
walls of water, while a whole nation pass'd in safety
through its sandy bosom: hungry lions have refus'd
their prey; and men unhurt have walk'd amidst con-
suming flames: but never yet did time, once past, return.

True. Though the continued chain of time has never
once been broke, nor ever will, but uninterrupted must
keep on its course, 'till lost in eternity, it ends where
it first began; yet as Heaven can repair whatever evils
time can bring upon us, we ought never to despair.
But business requires our attendance; business the
youth's best preservative from ill, as idleness his worst
of snares. Will you go with me?

Barn. I'll take a little time to reflect on what has
past, and follow you. [*Exit Trueman.*] I might have
trusted Trueman, and engaged him to apply to my Uncle
to repair the wrong I have done my master. But what
of Millwood? Must I expose her too? Ungenerous and
base! Then Heaven requires it not. But Heaven re-
quires that I forsake her. What, never to see her more!
Does Heaven require that? I hope I may see her, and
Heaven not be offended. Presumptuous hope! Dearly
already have I prov'd my frailty. Should I once more
tempt Heaven, I may be left to fall, never to rise again.
Yet shall I leave her, for ever leave her, and not let her
know the cause? She who loves me with such a bound-
less passion! Can cruelty be duty? I judge of what she
then must feel, by what I now endure. The love of
life, and fear of shame, opposed by inclination strong
as death or shame, like wind and tide in raging con-
flict met, when neither can prevail, keep me in doubt;
how then can I determine?

Enter THOROWGOOD.

Thor. Without a cause assign'd, or notice given, to
absent yourself last night was a fault, young man, and
I came to chide you for it, but I hope I am prevented.
That modest blush, the confusion so visible in your face,
speak grief and shame. When we have offended Hea-
ven, it requires no more; and shall man, who needs

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himself to be forgiven, the harder to appease? If my pardon or love be of moment to your peace, look up secure of both.

Barn. This goodness has overcome me. [*Aside.*] O Sir, you know not the nature and extent of my offence! and I should abuse your mistaken bounty to receive it. Though I had rather die than speak my shame; though racks could not have forced the guilty secret from my breast, your kindness has.

Thor. Enough, enough, whate'er it be; this concern shews you're convinc'd, and I am satisfied. How painful is the sense of guilt to an ingenuous mind! Some youthful folly, which it were prudent not to inquire into. When we consider the frail condition of humanity, it may raise our pity, not our wonder, that youth should go astray; when reason, weak at the best, opposed to inclination, scarce form'd, and wholly unassisted by experience, faintly contends, or willingly becomes the slave of sense. The state of youth is much to be deplored, and the more so, because they see it not; being then to danger most expos'd, when they are least prepared for their defence. [*Aside.*]

Barn. It will be known, and you recall your pardon, and abhor me.

Thor. I never will. Yet be upon your guard in this gay thoughtless season of your life; when the sense of pleasures quick, and passions high, the voluptuous appetites, raging and fierce, demand the strongest curb; take heed of a lapse; when vice becomes habitual, the very power of leaving it is lost.

Barn. Hear me, on my knees, confess—

Thor. Not a syllable more upon this subject; it were not mercy, but cruelty, to hear what must give you such torment to reveal.

Barn. This generosity amazes and distracts me.

Thor. This remorse makes thee dearer to me than if thou hadst never offended. Whatever is your fault, of this I am certain, 'twas harder for you to offend than me to pardon.

Barn. Villain, villain, villain! basely so wrong'd

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excellent a man! Should I again return to folly?
 Detested thought!—But what of Millwood then?
 Why, I renounce her;—give her up.—The
 struggle's over, and virtue has prevail'd. Reason may
 convince, but gratitude compels. This unlook'd-for
 generosity has sav'd me from destruction. *[Goes.]*

Enter a FOOTMAN.

Foot. Sir, two ladies from your uncle in the country
 desire to see you.

Barn. Who should they be? *[Aside.]* Tell them I'll
 wait upon 'em. *[Exit Footman.]*

Barn. Methinks I dread to see 'em.—Now every
 thing alarms me.—Guilt, what a coward hast thou
 made me!

S C E N E II.

Another Room in Thorowgood's house.

MILLWOOD and LUCY discovered. *Enter FOOTMAN.*

Foot. Ladies, he'll wait upon you immediately.

Mill. 'Tis very well—I thank you. *[Exit Footman.]*

Enter BARNWELL.

Barn. Confusion! Millwood!

Mill. That angry look tells me, that here I am an
 unwelcome guest; I fear'd as much; the unhappy are
 so every-where.

Barn. Will nothing but my utter ruin content you?

Mill. Unkind and cruel! Lost myself, your happiness
 is now my only care.

Barn. How did you gain admission?

Mill. Saying we were desired by your uncle to visit
 and deliver a message to you; we were received by the
 family without suspicion, and with much respect con-
 ducted here.

Barn. Why did you come at all?

Mill. I never shall trouble you more. I'm come to
 take my leave for ever. Such is the malice of my fate.
 I go hopeless, despairing ever to return. This hour is

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all I have left: one short hour is all I have to bestow on love and you, for whom I thought the longest life too short.

Barn. Then we are met to part for ever?

Mill. It must be so. Yet think not that time or absence shall ever put a period to my grief, or make me love you less. Though I must leave you, yet condemn me not.

Barn. Condemn you! No, I approve your resolution, and rejoice to hear it; 'tis just—'tis necessary—I have well weigh'd and found it so.

Lucy. I'm afraid the young man has more sense than she thought he had. [*Aside.*]

Barn. Before you came I had determin'd never to see you more.

Mill. Confusion! [*Aside.*]

Lucy. Ay, we are all out; this is a turn so unexpected, that I shall make nothing of my part; they must e'en play the scene betwixt themselves. [*Aside.*]

Mill. 'Twas some relief to think, though absent, you would love me still: but to find, tho' Fortune had been indulgent, that you, more cruel and inconstant, had resolv'd to cast me off—this, as I never could expect, I have not learnt to bear.

Barn. I am sorry to hear you blame me in a resolution that so well becomes us both.

Mill. I have reason for what I do, but you have none.

Barn. Can we want a reason for parting, who have so many to wish we never had met?

Mill. Look on me, Barnwell; am I deform'd or old, that satiety so soon succeeds enjoyment? nay, look again: am I not she whom yesterday you thought the fairest and the kindest of her sex? whose hand, trembling with ecstacy you press'd and moulded thus, while on my eyes you gaz'd with such delight, as if desire encreased by being fed?

Barn. No more: let me repent my former follies, if possible, without remembering what they were.

Mill. Why?

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Barn. Such is my frailty, that 'tis dangerous.

Mill. Where is the danger, since we are to part?

Barn. The thought of that already is too painful.

Mill. If it be painful to part, then I may hope at least you do not hate me?

Barn. No—no—I never said I did.—O my heart!

Mill. Perhaps you pity me?

Barn. I do—I do—Indeed I do.

Mill. You'll think upon me?

Barn. Doubt it not, while I can think at all.

Mill. You may judge an embrace at parting too great a favour—tho' it would be the last. [*He draws back.*]
A look shall then suffice.—Farewell—for ever.

[*Exeunt Millwood and Lucy.*]

Barn. If to resolve to suffer be to conquer—I have conquer'd.—Painful victory!

Re-enter MILLWOOD and LUCY.

Mill. One thing I had forgot;—I never must return to my own house again. This I thought proper to let you know, lest your mind should change, and you should seek in vain to find me there. Forgive me this second intrusion; I only came to give you this caution, and that perhaps was needless.

Barn. I hope it was; yet it is kind, and I must thank you for it.

Mill. My friend, your arm. [*To Lucy.*] Now I am gone for ever. [*Going.*]

Barn. One thing more—Sure there's no danger in my knowing where you go? If you think otherwise—

Mill. Alas!

[*Weeping.*]

Lucy. We are right, I find; that's my cue. [*Aside.*]
Ah, dear Sir! she's going—she knows not whither; but go she must.

Barn. Humanity obliges me to wish you well: why will you thus expose yourself to needless troubles?

Lucy. Nay, there's no help for it: she must quit the town immediately, and the kingdom as soon as possible. It was no small matter, you may be sure, that could make her resolve to leave you.

Mill. No more, my friend; since he for whose dear sake alone I suffer, and am content to suffer, is kind and pities me. Where-e'er I wander thro' wilds and deserts benighted and forlorn, that thought shall give me comfort.

Barn. For my sake?—O tell me how; which way am I so curs'd to bring such ruin on thee?

Mill. No matter, I am contented with my lot.

Barn. Leave me not in this uncertainty.

Mill. I have said too much.

Barn. How, how am I the cause of your undoing?

Mill. To know it will but encrease your troubles.

Barn. My troubles can't be greater than they are.

Lucy. Well, well, Sir, if she won't satisfy you, I will.

Barn. I am bound to you beyond expression.

Mill. Remember, Sir, that I desired you not to hear it.

Barn. Begin, and ease my racking expectation.

Lucy. Why, you must know, my Lady here was an only child, and her parents dying while she was young, left her and her fortune (no inconsiderable one I assure you) to the care of a gentleman, who has a good estate of his own.

Mill. Ay, ay, the barbarous man is rich enough; but what are riches when compared to love?

Lucy. For a while he perform'd the office of a faithful guardian, settled her in a house, hir'd her servants.

—But you have seen in what manner she liv'd, so I need say no more of that.

Mill. How I shall live hereafter, Heaven knows!

Lucy. All things went on as one could wish; till some time ago, his wife dying, he fell violently in love with his charge, and wou'd fain have married her: now the man is neither old nor ugly, but a good personable sort of a man; but I don't know how it was, she cou'd never endure him. In short, her ill-usage so provoked him, that he brought in an account of his executorship, wherein he makes her debtor to him.—

Mill. A trifle in itself, but more than enough to ruin me, whom by his unjust account he had stripp'd of all before.

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Lucy. Now she having neither money, nor friend, except me, who am as unfortunate as herself, he compell'd her to pass his account, and give bond for the sum he demanded; but still provided handsomely for her, and continued his courtship, till being inform'd by his spies (truly I suspect some in her own family), that you were entertain'd at her house, and stayed with her all night, he came this morning raving and storming like a madman, talks no more of marriage, (so there's no hope of making up matters that way), but vows her ruin, unless she'll allow him the same favour that he supposes she granted you.

Barn. Must she be ruin'd, or find her refuge in another's arms?

Mill. He gave me but an hour to resolve in; that's happily spent with you——And now I go——

Barn. To be expos'd to all the rigours of the various seasons, the summer's parching heat, and winter's cold; unhoused, to wander, friendless, thro' the inhospitable world, in misery and want; attended with fear and danger, and pursued with malice and revenge! Wou'dst thou endure all this for me, and can I do nothing, nothing, to prevent it?

Lucy. 'Tis really a pity there can be no way found out.

Barn. O, where are all my resolutions now? Like early vapours, or the morning dew, chas'd by the sun's warm beams, they're vanish'd and lost, as though they had never been.

Lucy. Now I advis'd her, Sir, to comply with the gentleman; that would not only put an end to her troubles, but make her fortune at once.

Barn. Tormenting fiend, away! I had rather perish, nay, see her perish, than have her saved by him. I will myself prevent her ruin, though with my own. A moment's patience; I'll return immediately.

[Exit Barnwell.]

Lucy. 'Twas well you came, or by what I can perceive, you had lost him.

Mill. That, I must confess, was a danger I did not

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foresee; I was only afraid he should have come without money. You know, a house of entertainment, like mine, is not kept without expence.

Lucy. That's very true; but then you should be reasonable in your demands; 'tis pity to discourage a young man.

Mill. Leave that to me.

Re-enter BARNWELL, with a bag of money.

Barn. What am I about to do? — Now you who boast your reason all-sufficient, suppose yourselves in my condition, and determine for me; whether 'tis right to let her suffer for my faults, or, by this small addition to my guilt, prevent the ill effects of what is past.

Lucy. These young sinners think every thing in the ways of wickedness so strange! — But I cou'd tell him, that this is nothing but what's very common; for one vice as naturally begets another, as a father a son. But he'll find out that himself, if he lives long enough.

[Aside.]

Barn. Here, take this, and with it purchase your deliverance; return to your house, and live in peace and safety.

Mill. So I may hope to see you there again?

Barn. Answer me not, but fly, lest in the agonies of my remorse, I take again what is not mine to give, and abandon thee to want and misery.

Mill. Say but you'll come.

Barn. You are my fate, my heaven, or my hell; only leave me now, dispose of me hereafter as you please.

[Exeunt Mill and Lucy.]

Barn. What have I done? Were my resolutions founded on reason, and sincerely made? Why then has Heaven suffered me to fall? I sought not the occasion; and, if my heart deceives me not, compassion and generosity were my motives. Is virtue inconsistent with itself? Or are vice and virtue only empty names? or do they depend on accidents beyond our power to produce, or to prevent; wherein we have no part, and yet must be determined by the event? — But why should

I attempt to reason? All is confusion, horror, and remorse. I find I am lost, cast down from all my late erected hope, and plunged again in gail, yet scarce know how or why:

Such undistinguish'd horrors make my brain,
Like hell, the seat of darkness and of pain. [Exit]

ACT III. SCENE I.

A Room in Thorowgood's house.

Enter THOROWGOOD and TRUEMAN.

THOROWGOOD.

METHINKS I would not have you only learn the method of merchandize, and practise it hereafter merely as a means of getting wealth: it will be well worth your pains to study it as a science, to see how it is founded in reason, and the nature of things; how it promotes humanity, as it has open'd, and yet keeps up an intercourse between nations far remote from one another in situation, customs and religion; promoting arts, industry, peace and plenty; by mutual benefits diffusing mutual love from pole to pole.

True. Something of this I have considered, and hope, by your assistance, to extend my thoughts much farther. I have observ'd those countries where trade is promoted and encouraged, do not make discoveries to destroy, but to improve mankind; by love and friendship to tame the fierce, and polish the most savage; to teach them the advantage of honest traffic, by taking from them, with their own consent, their useless superfluities; and giving them, in return, what, from their ignorance in manual arts, their situation, or some other accident, they stand in need of.

Thor. 'Tis justly observ'd. The populous East, luxuriant, abounds with glittering gems, bright pearls, aromatic spices, and health-restoring drugs: the late-found western world's rich earth glows with unnum-

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ber'd veins of gold and silver ore. On every climate, and on every country, Heaven has bestowed some good peculiar to itself. It is the industrious merchant's business to collect the various blessings of each soil and climate, and, with the product of the whole, to enrich his native country. — Well! I have examined your accounts: they are not only just, as I have always found them, but regularly kept, and fairly enter'd. I commend your diligence. Method in business is the surest guide; he who neglects it frequently stumbles, and always wanders perplex'd, uncertain, and in danger. Are Barnwell's accounts ready for my inspection? He does not use to be the last on these occasions.

True. Upon receiving your orders he retir'd, I thought, in some confusion. If you please I'll go and hasten him. I hope he has not been guilty of any neglect.

Thor. I'm now going to the Exchange; let him know, at my return I expect to find him ready. *[Exit.]*

Enter MARIA with a book. Sits and reads.

Mar. How forcible is truth! The weakest mind, inspir'd with love of that, fixed and collected in itself, with indifference beholds the united forces of earth and hell opposing. Such souls are rais'd above the sense of pain, or so supported, that they regard it not. The martyr cheaply purchases his heaven; small are his sufferings, great is his reward. Not so the wretch who combats love with duty; whose mind, weakened and dissolved by the soft passion, feeble and hopeless, opposes his own desires. — What is an hour, a day, a year of pain, to a whole life of tortures such as these?

Enter TRUEMAN.

True. O Barnwell! O my friend! how art thou fallen!

Mar. Ha! Barnwell! What of him? Speak, say, what of Barnwell!

True. 'Tis not to be concealed: I've news to tell of him that will afflict your generous father, yourself, and all who knew him.

Mar. Defend us, Heaven!

True. I cannot speak it. See there.

[*Trueman gives a letter.*]

Maria reads.

"I know my absence will surprise my honoured master and yourself; and the more, when you shall understand, that the reason of my withdrawing is my having embezzled part of the cash with which I was intrusted. After this, 'tis needless to inform you, that I intend never to return again. Though this might have been known by examining my accounts, yet, to prevent that unnecessary trouble, and to cut off all fruitless expectations of my return, I have left this from the lost

GEORGE BARNWELL."

True. Lost indeed! Yet how he should be guilty of what he there charges himself withal, raises my wonder equal to my grief. Never had youth a higher sense of virtue. Justly he thought, and as he thought he practised; never was life more regular than his. An understanding uncommon at his years, an open, generous manliness of temper; his manners easy, unaffected, and engaging.

Mar. This, and much more you might have said with truth. He was the delight of every eye, and joy of every heart that knew him.

True. Since such he was, and was my friend, can I support his loss? See the fairest happiest maid this wealthy city boasts, kindly condescends to weep for thy unhappy fate, poor ruin'd Barnwell!

Mar. Trueman, do you think a soul so delicate as his, so sensible of shame, can e'er submit to live a slave to vice?

True. Never, never. So well I know him, I'm sure this act of his, so contrary to his nature, must have been caused by some unavoidable necessity.

Mar. Is there no means yet to preserve him?

True. O that there were! But few men recover reputation lost, a merchant never. Nor would he, I fear,

who I should find him, ever be brought to look his injur'd master in the face.

Mar. I fear as much, and therefore would never have my father know it.

True. That's impossible.

Mar. What's the sum?

True. 'Tis considerable: I've mark'd it here to shew it, with the letter, to your father at his return.

Mar. If I should supply the money, cou'd you so dispose of that, and the account, as to conceal this unhappy mismanagement from my father?

True. Nothing more easy. But can you intend it? Will you save a helpless wretch from ruin? Oh! 'twere an act worthy such exalted virtue as Maria's. Sure Heaven, in mercy to my friend, inspir'd the generous thought!

Mar. Doubt not but I would purchase so great a happiness at a much dearer price. But how shall he be found?

True. Trust to my diligence for that. In the mean time, I'll conceal his absence from your father, or find such excuses for it, that the real cause shall never be suspected.

Mar. In attempting to save from shame, one who we hope may yet return to virtue; to Heaven, and you, the only witnesses of this action, I appeal, whether I do any thing misbecoming my sex and character.

True. Earth must approve the deed, and Heaven, I doubt not, will reward it.

Mar. If Heaven succeeds it, I am well rewarded. A virgin's fame is sullied by Suspicion's lightest breath: and therefore, as this must be a secret from my father and the world, for Barnwell's sake; for mine, let it be so to him.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II.

A Room in Millwood's house.

Enter LUCY and BLUNT.

Lucy. Well! what do you think of Millwood's conduct now?

Blunt. I own it is surprising: I don't know which to admire most, her feigned, or his real passion; tho' I have sometimes been afraid, that her avarice would discover her. But his youth, and want of experience, make it the easier to impose on him.

Lucy. No, it is his love. To do him justice, notwithstanding his youth, he don't want understanding. But you men are much easier imposed on in these affairs, than your vanity will allow you to believe. Let me see the wisest of you all as much in love with me as Barnwell is with Millwood, and I'll engage to make as great a fool of him.

Blunt. And all circumstances considered, to make as much money of him too?

Lucy. I can't answer for that. Her artifice in making him rob his master at first, and the various stratagems by which she has obliged him to continue that course, astonish even me, who know her so well.

Blunt. But then you are to consider, that the money was his master's.

Lucy. There was the difficulty of it. Had it been his own, it had been nothing. Were the world his, she might have it for a smile. But those golden days are gone; he's ruin'd, and Millwood's hopes of farther profits there are at an end.

Blunt. That's no more than we all expected.

Lucy. Being call'd by his master to make up his accounts, he was forc'd to quit his house and service, and wisely flies to Millwood for relief and entertainment.

Blunt. I have not heard of this before: how did she receive him?

Lucy. As you wou'd expect. She wonder'd what he meant, was astonish'd at his impudence, and, with an air of modesty peculiar to herself, swore so heartily that she never saw him before, that she put me out of countenance.

Blunt. That's much indeed! But how did Barnwell behave?

Lucy. He griev'd, and at length, enraged at this barbarous treatment, was preparing to be gone; and making towards the door, shew'd a sum of money which he had brought from his master's, the last he is ever like to have from thence.

Blunt. But then Millwood?

Lucy. Ay, she, with her usual address, returned to her old arts of lying, swearing and dissembling; hung on his neck, wept, and swore 'twas meant in jest. The amorous youth melted into tears, threw the money into her lap, and swore he had rather die than think her false.

Blunt. Strange infatuation!

Lucy. But what ensued was stranger still. As doubts and fears, followed by reconciliation, ever increase love where the passion is sincere; so in him it caus'd so wild a transport of excessive fondness, such joy, such grief, such pleasure, and such anguish, that Nature seem'd sinking with the weight, and his charm'd soul disposed to quit his breast for hers. Just then, when every passion with lawless anarchy prevail'd, and Reason was in the raging tempest lost, the cruel, artful Millwood prevail'd upon the wretched youth to promise—what I tremble but to think on.

Blunt. I am amazed! What can it be?

Lucy. You will be more so, to hear it is to attempt the life of his nearest relation and best benefactor.—

Blunt. His uncle! whom we have often heard him speak of, as a gentleman of a large estate, and fair character, in the county where he lives!

Lucy. The same. She was no sooner possessed of the last dear purchase of his ruin, but her avarice, insatiate as the grave, demanded this horrid sacrifice, Barn-

Act III. The MIST of G. BARNWELL. 29

well's near relation, and unsuspected virtue, must give too easy means to seize this good man's treasure; whose blood must seal the dreadful secret, and prevent the terrors of her guilty fears.

Blunt. Is it possible she cou'd persuade him to do an act like that? He is by nature honest, grateful, compassionate and generous. And though his love, and her artful persuasions, have wrought him to practise what he most abhors; yet we all can witness for him, with what reluctance he has still complied: so many tears he shed o'er each offence, as might, if possible, sanctify theft, and make a merit of a crime.

Lucy. 'Tis true, at the naming the murder of his uncle, he started into rage; and, breaking from her arms, (where she 'till then had held him with well-dissembled love, and false endearments), called her cruel, monster, devil, and told her she was born for his destruction. She thought it not for her purpose to meet his rage with her rage, but affected a most passionate fit of grief, railed at her fate, and curs'd her wayward stars, that still her wants shou'd force her to press him to act such deeds, as she must needs abhor as well as he. She told him necessity had no law, and love no bounds; that therefore he never truly lov'd, but meant in her necessity to forsake her. Then she kneel'd and swore, that since by his refusal he had given her cause to doubt his love, she never wou'd see him more; unless, to prove it true, he robb'd his uncle, to supply her wants, and murder'd him to keep it from discovery.

Blunt. I am astonish'd! What said he?

Lucy. Speechless he stood; but in his face you might have read, that various passions tore his very soul. Oft he in anguish threw his eyes towards heaven, and then as often bent their beams on her; then wept, and groan'd, and beat his troubled breast; at length, with horror not to be express'd, he cry'd, Thou cursed fair! have not I given dreadful proofs of love? What drew me from my youthful innocence, and stain'd my then unspotted soul, but love? What caus'd me to rob my worthy gentle master, but cursed love? What makes

me now a fugitive from his service, loath'd by myself, and scorn'd by all the world, but love? What fills my eyes with tears, my soul with torture, never felt on this side death before? Why, love, love, love: and why, above all, do I resolve (for tearing his hair, he cried, I do resolve) to kill my uncle?

Blunt. Was she not moved? It makes me weep to hear the sad relation.

LUCY. Yes—with joy, that she had gain'd her point. She gave him no time to cool, but urged him to attempt it instantly. He's now gone. If he performs it, and escapes, there's more money for her; if not, he'll ne'er return, and then she's fairly rid of him.

Blunt. 'Tis time the world were rid of such a monster.

Lucy. If we don't use our endeavours to prevent the murder, we are as bad as she.

Blunt. I'm afraid it is too late.

Lucy. Perhaps not. Her barbarity to Barnwell makes me hate her. We have run too great a length with her already. I did not think her or myself so wicked, as I find, upon reflection, we are.

Blunt. 'Tis true we have been all too much so. But there is something so horrid in murder, that all other crimes seem nothing when compared to that: I would not be involved in the guilt of it for all the world.

Lucy. Nor I, Heaven knows. Therefore let us clear ourselves, by doing all that is in our power to prevent it. I have just thought of a way that to me seems probable. Will you join with me to detect this cursed design?

Blunt. With all my heart. He who knows of a murder intended to be committed, and does not discover it, in the eye of the law and reason is a murderer.

Lucy. Let us lose no time; I'll acquaint you with the particulars as we go. [Exeunt.]

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SCENE III.

A Walk at some distance from a country-seat.

Enter BARNWELL.

Barn. A dismal gloom obscures the face of day: either the sun has slipt behind a cloud, or journeys down the west with more than common speed, to avoid the sight of what I am doom'd to act. Since I set forth on this accurs'd design, where-e'er I tread, methinks, the solid earth trembles beneath my feet. Yonder limpid stream, whose hoary fall has made a natural cascade, as I pass'd by, in doleful accents seem'd to murmur—
Murder! The earth, the air, and water seem'd concern'd. But that's not strange: the world is punish'd, and Nature feels a shock, when Providence permits a good man's fall. Just Heaven! then what should I feel for him that was my father's only brother, and since his death has been to me a father! that took me up an infant and an orphan, rear'd me with tenderest care, and still indulg'd me with most paternal fondness! Yet here I stand his destin'd murderer!—I stiffen with horror at my own impiety——'Tis yet unperform'd——
What if I quit my bloody purpose, and fly the place! [*Going, then stops.*]——But whither, O whither shall I fly? My master's once friendly doors are ever shut against me; and without money Millwood will never see me more; and she has got such firm possession of my heart, and governs there with such despotic sway, that life is not to be endured without her. Ay, there's the cause of all my sin and sorrow: 'tis more than love; it is the fever of the soul, and madness of desire. In vain does nature, reason, conscience, all oppose it: the impetuous passion bears down all before it, and drives me on to lust, to theft and murder. Oh conscience! feeble guide to virtue! thou only shew'st us when we go astray, but wantest power to stop us in our course—
Ha! in yonder shady walk I see my uncle——He's

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alone.—Now for my disguise. [*Plucks out a vizor.*]
 —This is his hour of private meditation. Thus
 daily he prepares his soul for heaven, while I—But
 what have I to do with heaven! Ha! No struggles,
 conscience—

Hence, hence, remorse, and ev'ry thought that's good!
 The storm that lust began must end in blood.

[*Puts on the vizor, draws a pistol, and exits.*]

S C E N E IV.

A close walk in a wood.

Enter UNCLE.

Uncle. If I were superstitious, I should fear some danger lurk'd unseen, or death were nigh. A heavy melancholy clouds my spirits. My imagination is fill'd with ghastly forms of dreary graves, and bodies changed by death; when the pale, lengthen'd visage attracts each weeping eye, and fills the musing soul, at once with grief and horror, pity and aversion. I will indulge the thought. The wise man prepares himself for death, by making it familiar to his mind. When strong reflections hold the mirror near, and the living in the dead behold their future self; how does each inordinate passion and desire cease, or sicken at the view! The mind scarce moves; the blood, curdling and chill'd, creeps slowly through the veins: fix'd, still, and motionless we stand, so like the solemn object of our thoughts, we are almost at present what we must be hereafter; 'till curiosity awakes the soul, and sets it on inquiry.

Enter GEORGE BARNWELL at a distance.

O Death, thou strange mysterious power, seen every day, yet never understood, but by the incommunicative dead, what art thou? the extensive mind of man, that with a thought circles the earth's vast globe, sinks to the centre, or ascends above the stars, that worlds exotic finds, or thinks it finds, thy thick clouds attempts

to pass in vain; lost and bewilder'd in the horrid gloom,
defeated she returns more doubtful than before, of no-
thing certain but of labour lost.

*[During this speech Barnwell sometimes presents the
pistol, and draws it back again.]*

Barn. Oh, 'tis impossible! *[Throwing down the pistol.]*

Uncle starts, and attempts to draw his sword.

Uncle. A man so near me! arm'd and malqu'd—

Barn. Nay, then there's no retreat.

[Plucks a poniard from his bosom, and stabs him.]

Uncle. Oh! I am slain! All-gracious Heav'n regard
the prayer of thy dying servant: bless with thy choicest
blessings my dearest Nephew, forgive my murderer, and
take my fleeting soul to endless mercy.

*[Barnwell throws off his mask, runs to him, and
kneeling by him, raises and chafes him.]*

Barn. Expiring saint! O murder'd, martyr'd Uncle!
lift up your dying eyes, and view your Nephew in your
murderer—O do not look so tenderly upon me—

Let indignation lighten from your eyes, and blast me
ere you die—By Heaven he weeps in pity of my
woes!—Tears, tears; for blood!—The murder'd, in
the agonies of death, weeps for his murderer.—O!
speak your pious purpose; pronounce my pardon then,
and take me with you—He won'd, but cannot.—

O why, with such fond affection, do you press my mur-
dering hand?—What! will you kiss me? *[Barnwell
kisses his Uncle, who groans and dies.]* Life, that hover'd
on his lips but till he had sealed my pardon, in that kiss
expired. He's gone for ever—and oh! I follow—

[Swoons away upon his Uncle's dead body.] Do I still
live to press the suffering bosom of the earth?—Do I
still breathe, and taint with my infectious breath the
wholesome air?—Let Heaven from its high throne, in
justice or in mercy, now look down upon that dear mur-
dered saint, and me the murderer; and if his veh-
geance spares, let pity strike and end my wretched
being.—Murder, the worst of crimes, and parricide,
the worst of murders, and this the worst of parricides!

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Cain, who stands on record from the birth of time, and must to it's last final period, as accursed, slew a brother favour'd above him: detested Nero, by another's hand, dispatch'd a mother that he fear'd and hated: but I with my own hand have murder'd a brother, mother, father, and a friend most loving and belov'd.—This execrable act of mine is without a parallel—O may it ever stand alone, the last of murders, as it is the worst!

The rich man thus, in torment and despair,
 Preferr'd his vain, but charitable pray'r:
 The fool, his own soul lost, wou'd fain be wise
 For others good; but Heav'n his suit denies.
 By laws and means well known we stand or fall;
 And one eternal rule remains for all.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A Room in Thorowgood's House.

Enter MARIA.

MARIA.

HOW falsely do they judge, who censure or applaud,
 as we're afflicted or rewarded here! I know I am unhappy; yet cannot charge myself with any crime, more than the common frailties of our kind, that shou'd provoke just Heav'n to mark me out for sufferings so uncommon and severe. Falsely to atcuse ourselves, Heav'n must abhor. Then it is just and right that innocence should suffer; for Heav'n must be just in all its ways. Perhaps by that we are kept from moral evils, much worse than penal, or more improv'd in virtue. Or may not the lesser ills that we sustain be made the means of greater good to others? Might all the joyless days and sleepless nights that I have past, but purchase peace for thee,

Thou dear, dear cause of all my grief and pain!
 Small were the loss, and infinite the gain;
 Tho' to the grave in secret love I pine,
 So life and fame, and happiness were thine.

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Enter TRUEMAN. What news of Barnwell?

True. None: I have sought him with the greatest diligence, but all in vain.

Mar. Does my father yet suspect the cause of his absence?

True. All appeared so just and fair to him; it is not possible he ever should. But his absence will no longer be conceal'd. Your father is wise; and though he seems to hearken to the friendly excuses I wou'd make for Barnwell, yet, I am afraid, he regards 'em only as such, without suffering them to influence his judgment.

Mar. How does the unhappy youth defeat all our designs to serve him? yet I can never repent what we have done. Shou'd he return, 'twill make his reconciliation with my father easier, and preserve him from future reproach of a malicious unforgiving world.

Enter THOROWGOOD and LUCY.

Thor. This woman here has given me a sad, and (bating some circumstances) too probable an account of Barnwell's defection.

Lucy. I am sorry, Sir, that my frank confession of my former unhappy course of life should cause you to suspect my truth on this occasion.

Thor. It is not that; your confession has in it all the appearance of truth. Among many other particulars, she informs me, that Barnwell has been influenced to break his trust, and wrong me, at several times, of considerable sums of money. Now as I know this to be false, I wou'd fain doubt the whole of her relation, too dreadful to be willingly believed.

Mar. Sir, your pardon: I find myself on a sudden so indispos'd, that I must retire. Providence opposes all attempts to save him. Poor ruin'd Barnwell! Wretched lost Maria!

[*Aside.* *Exit Maria.*]

Thor. How am I distress'd on every side! Pity for that unhappy youth, fear for the life of a much valued

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friend,—and then my child—the only joy and hope of my declining life.—Her melancholy increases hourly, and gives me painful apprehensions of her loss.—O Trueman! this person informs me, that your friend, at the instigation of an impious woman, is gone to rob and murder his venerable uncle.

True. O execrable deed! I am blasted with the horror of the thought!

Lucy. This delay may ruin all:

Thor. What to do or think, I know not: That he ever wrong'd me, I know is false; the rest may be so too; there's all my hope.

True. Trust not to that; rather suppose all true, than lose a moment's time. Even now the horrid deed may be doing—dreadful imagination!—or it may be done, and we be vainly debating on the means to prevent what is already past.

Thor. This earnestness convinces me that he knows more than he has yet discovered. What, ho! without there, who waits? [*Enter a Servant.*] Order the groom to saddle the swiftest horse, and prepare to set out with speed; an affair of life and death demands his diligence. [*Exit Servant.*] For you, whose behaviour on this occasion I have no time to commend as it deserves, I must engage your further assistance. Return and observe this Millwood till I come; I have your directions, and will follow you as soon as possible. [*Exit Lucy.*] Trueman, you I am sure will not be idle on this occasion.

[*Exit Thorowgood.*]

True. He only who is a friend can judge of my distress. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E II.

Millwood's House.

Enter MILLWOOD.

Mill. I wish I knew the event of his design. The attempt without success would ruin him. Well! what

ACT IV. The HIST. of G. BARNWELL. 47

have I to apprehend from that? I fear, too much. The mischief being only intended, his friends, thro' pity of his youth, turn all their rage on me. I should have thought of that before. Suppose the deed done. Then, and then only, I shall be secure. Or what if he returns without attempting it at all. [*Enter Barnwell bloody.*] But he is here, and I have done him wrong. His bloody hands shew he has done the deed, but sure he wants the prudence to conceal it.

Barn. Where shall I hide me? Whither shall I fly, to avoid the swift unerring hand of Justice?

Mill. Dismiss your fears: though thousands had pursued you to the door, yet being enter'd here, you are as safe as innocence. I have a cavern, by art so cunningly contriv'd, that the piercing eyes of jealousy and revenge may search in vain, nor find the entrance to the safe retreat. There will I hide you, if any danger's near.

Barn. O hide me——from myself, if it be possible; for while I bear my conscience in my bosom, tho' I were hid where man's eye never saw, nor light e'er dawn'd, 'twere all in vain. For oh! that inmate, that impartial Judge, will try, convict and sentence me for murder, and execute me with never ending torments. Behold these hands, all crimson'd o'er with my dear uncle's blood: here's a sight to make a statue start with horror, or turn a living man into a statue.

Mill. Ridiculous! then it seems you are afraid of your own shadow, or what's less than a shadow, your conscience.

Barn. Tho' to man unknown I did the accursed act, what can we hide from Heaven's all-seeing eye?

Mill. No more of this stuff. What advantage have you made of his death, or what advantage may yet be made of it? Did you secure the keys of his treasure, which no doubt were about him? What gold, what jewels, or what else of value have you brought me?

Barn. Think you I added sacrilege to murder? Oh! had you seen him as his life flow'd from him in a crim-

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son flood, and heard him praying for me by the double name of nephew and of murderer; (alas! alas! he knew not then, that his nephew was his murderer); how would you have wish'd as I did, though you had a thousand years of life to come, to have given them all to have lengthen'd his one hour! But being dead, I fled the sight of what my hands had done; nor could I, to have gain'd the Empire of the World, have violated by theft his sacred corpse.

Mill. Whining, preposterous, canting villain! to murder your uncle, to rob him of life, Nature's first, last, dear prerogative, after which there's no injury; then fear to take what he no longer wanted, and bring to me your penury and guilt. Do you think I'll hazard my reputation, nay, my life, to entertain you?

Barn. O Millwood!——this from thee!——But I have done. If you hate me, if you wish me dead, then are you happy; for oh! 'tis sure my grief will quickly end me.

Mill. In his madness he will discover all, and involve me in his ruin. We are on a precipice from whence there's no retreat for both.——Then to preserve myself.——[*Pauses.*]——There is no other way.——'Tis dreadful, but reflection comes too late when danger's pressing, and there's no room for choice.——It must be done. [*Aside. Rings a bell, enter a Servant.*] Fetch me an officer, and seize this villain. He has confess'd himself a murderer. Should I let him escape, I might justly be thought as bad as he. [*Exit Servant.*]

Barn. O Millwood! sure you do not, cannot mean it. Stop the messenger; upon my knees I beg you'd call him back. 'Tis fit I die indeed, but not by you. I will this instant deliver myself into the hands of justice, indeed I will; for death is all I wish. But thy ingratitude so tears my wounded soul, 'tis worse ten thousand times than death with torture.

Mill. Call it what you will; I am willing to live, and live secure, which nothing but your death can warrant.

Barn. If there be a pitch of wickedness that sets the

author beyond the reach of vengeance, you must be secure. But what remains for me, but a dismal dungeon, hard galling fetters, an awful trial, and an ignominious death, justly to fall unpitied and abhor'd? After death to be suspended between heaven and earth, a dreadful spectacle, the warning and horror of a gaping croud! This I cou'd bear, nay wish not to avoid, had it but come from any hand but thine.

Enter BLUNT, Officer and Attendants.

Mill. Heaven defend me! Conceal a murderer! Here, Sir, take this youth into your custody. I accuse him of murder, and will appear to make good my charge.

[They seize him.]

Barn. To whom, of what, or how shall I complain? I'll not accuse her: the hand of Heaven is in it, and this the punishment of lust and parricide. Yet Heaven, that justly cuts me off, still suffers her to live; perhaps to punish others. Tremendous mercy! So fiends are curs'd with immortality, to be the executioners of Heaven.

Be warn'd, ye youths, who see my sad despair:

Avoid lewd women, false as they are fair.

By reason guided, honest joys pursue:

The fair to honour, and to virtue true,

Just to herself, will ne'er be false to you.

By my example learn to shun my fate:

(How wretched is the man who's wife too late!)

Ere innocence, and fame, and life be lost,

Here purchase wisdom, cheaply, at my cost.

[Exit Barnwell, Officers and Attendants.]

Mill. Where's Lucy? Why is she absent at such a time?

Blunt. Wou'd I had been so too! Lucy will soon be here; and I hope, to thy confusion, thou devil!

Mill. Insolent! this to me?

Blunt. The worst that we know of the devil is, that he first seduces to sin, and then betrays to punishment.

[Exit Blunt.]

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Mill. They disapprove of my conduct then, and mean to take this opportunity to set up for themselves.

My ruin is resolved. I see my danger, but scorn both it and them; I was not born to fall by such weak instruments. *[Going.*

Enter THOROWGOOD.

Thor. Where is the scandal of her own sex, and curse of ours?

Mill. What means this insolence? Whom do you seek?

Thor. Millwood.

Mill. Well, you have found her then. I am Millwood.

Thor. Then you are the most impious wretch that e'er the sun beheld.

Mill. From your appearance I should have expected wisdom and moderation, but your manners bely your aspect. What is your business here? I know you not.

Thor. Hereafter you may know me better: I am Barnwell's master.

Mill. Then you are master to a villain, which, I think, is not much to your credit.

Thor. Had he been as much above thy arts as my credit is above thy malice, I need not have blush'd to own him.

Mill. My arts! I don't understand you, Sir; if he has done amiss, what's that to me? Was he my servant, or yours? You should have taught him better.

Thor. Why should I wonder to find such uncommon impudence in one arriv'd to such a height of wickedness? When innocence is banish'd, modesty soon follows. Know, sorceress, I'm not ignorant of any of the arts by which you first deceiv'd the unwary youth. I know how, step by step, you've led him on (reluctant and unwilling), from crime to crime, to this last horrid act, which you contriv'd, and by your cursed wiles even forced him to commit.

Mill. Ha! Lucy has got the advantage, and accused me first: unless I can turn the accusation, and fix it upon her and Blunt, I am lost. *[Aside.*

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Thor. Had I known your cruel design sooner, it had been prevented. To see you punish'd as the law directs, is all that now remains. Poor satisfaction! for he, innocent as he is, compared to you, must suffer too. But Heaven, who knows our frame, and graciously distinguishes between frailty and presumption, will make a difference, though man, who sees not the heart, and only judges by the outward action, cannot do it.

Mill. I find, Sir, we are both unhappy in our servants. I was surpris'd at such ill treatment without cause from a gentleman of your appearance, and therefore too hastily return'd it; for which I ask your pardon. I now perceive you have been so far impos'd on, as to think me engaged in a former correspondence with your servant, and some way or other accessory to his undoing.

Thor. I charge you as the cause, the sole cause of all his guilt, and all his sufferings, of all he now endures, and must endure, till a violent and shameful death shall put a dreadful period to his life and miseries together.

Mill. 'Tis very strange. But who's secure from scandal and detraction? So far from contributing to his ruin, I never spoke to him till since the fatal accident, which I lament as much as you. 'Tis true, I have a servant, on whose account he hath of late frequented my house. If she has abus'd my good opinion of her, am I to blame? Has not Barnwell done the same by you?

Thor. I hear you: pray, go on.

Mill. I have been inform'd he had a violent passion for her, and she for him; but till now I always thought it innocent. I know her poor, and given to expensive pleasures. Now who can tell but she may have influenced the amorous youth to commit this murder, to supply her extravagancies? It must be so. I now recollect a thousand circumstances that confirm it. I'll have her, and a man servant whom I suspect as an accomplice, secured immediately. I hope, Sir, you will

upon her and Blunt I am just

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lay aside your ill-grounded suspicions of me, and join to punish the real contrivers of this bloody deed.

[Offers to go.

Thor. Madam, you pass not this way. I see your design, but shall protect them from your malice!

Mill. I hope you will not use your influence, and the credit of your name, to screen such guilty wretches.

Consider, Sir, the wickedness of persuading a thoughtless youth to such a crime.

Thor. I do;—and of betraying him when it was done.

Mill. That which you call betraying him, may convince you of my innocence. She who loves him, tho' she contriv'd the murder, would never have delivered him into the hands of justice, as I, struck with horror at his crimes, have done.

Thor. How shou'd an unexperienc'd youth escape her snares? The powerful magic of her wit and form might betray the wisest to simple dotage, and fire the blood that age had froze long since. Even I, that with just prejudice came prepar'd, had by her artful story been deceiv'd, but that my strong conviction of her guilt makes even a doubt impossible. Those whom subtilly you would accuse, you know are your accusers; and (which proves unanswerably their innocence and your guilt), they accused you before the deed was done, and did all that was in their power to prevent it.

Mill. Sir, you are very hard to be convinc'd; but I have a proof, which, when produc'd, will silence all objections.

[Exit *Mill.*

Enter LUCY, TRUEMAN, BLUNT, Officers, &c.

Lucy. Gentlemen, pray place yourselves, some on one side of that door, and some on the other; watch her entrance, and act as your prudence shall direct you. This way, [To *Thorowgood*.] and note her behaviour. I have observ'd her; she's driven to the last extremity, and is forming some desperate resolution. I guess at her design.

*Re-enter MILLWOOD with a pistol. Trueman se-
cures her.*

True. Here thy power of doing mischief ends, deceit-
ful, cruel, bloody woman!

Mill. Fool, hypocrite, villain, man! thou canst not
call me that.

True. To call thee woman were to wrong thy sex;
thou devil!

Mill. That imaginary being is an emblem of thy cur-
sed sex collected: a mirror, wherein each particular man
may see his own likeness, and that of all mankind.

Thor. Think not by aggravating the faults of others
to extenuate thy own, of which the abuse of such un-
common perfections of mind and body is not the least.

Mill. If such I had, well may I curse your barbarous
sex, who robb'd me of 'em ere I knew their worth;
then left me too late, to count their value by their loss.
Another and another spoiler came, and all my gain was
poverty and reproach. My soul disdain'd, and yet dis-
dains dependence and contempt. Riches, no matter by
what means obtain'd, I saw secured the worst of men
from both. I found it therefore necessary to be rich,
and to that end I summon'd all my arts. You call 'em
wicked; let them be so, they were such as my conver-
sation with your sex had furnish'd me withal.

Thor. Sure none but the worst of men convers'd with
thee.

Mill. Men of all degrees, and all professions, I have
known, yet found no difference, but in their several
capacities; all were alike wicked to the utmost of their
power. In pride, contention, avarice, cruelty and re-
venge, the reverend priesthood were my unerring guides.
From suburb magistrates, who live by ruin'd reputa-
tions, as the inhospitable natives of Cornwall do by
shipwrecks, I learn'd, that to charge my innocent neigh-
bours with my crimes, was to merit their protection;
for to screen the guilty is the less scandalous, when
many are suspected; and detraction, like darkness and

death, blackens all objects, and levels all distinction. Such are your venal magistrates, who favour none but such as by their office they are sworn to punish. With them not to be guilty is the worst of crimes, and large fees privately paid are every needful virtue.

Thor. Your practice has sufficiently discovered your contempt of laws, both human and divine; no wonder then, that you should hate the officers of both.

Mill. I know you, and I hate you all: I expect no mercy, and I ask for none; I follow'd my inclinations, and that the best of you do every day. All actions seem alike natural and indifferent to man and beast, who devour, or are devour'd, as they meet with others weaker or stronger than themselves.

Thor. What pity it is a mind so comprehensive, daring, and inquisitive, should be a stranger to Religion's sweet and powerful charms!

Mill. I am not fool enough to be an atheist, though I have known enough of men's hypocrisy to make a thousand simple women so. Whatever Religion is in itself, as practised by mankind, it has caused the evils you say it was design'd to cure. War, plague, and famine, have not destroyed so many of the human race as this pretended piety has done; and with such barbarous cruelty, as if the only way to honour Heaven were to turn the present world into hell.

Thor. Truth is truth, though from an enemy, and spoken in malice. You bloody, blind, and superstitious bigots, how will you answer this?

Mill. What are your laws, of which you make your boast, but the fool's wisdom and the coward's valour, the instrument and screen of all your villainies? By them you punish in others what you act yourselves, or wou'd have acted, had you been in their circumstances. The judge who condemns the poor man for being a thief, had been a thief himself had he been poor. Thus you go on deceiving, and being deceived, harrassing, plaguing, and destroying one another. But women are your universal prey.

ACT V. The HIST. of G. BARNWELL. 33

Women, by whom you are, the source of joy,
 With cruel arts you labour to destroy;
 A thousand ways our ruin you pursue,
 Yet blame in us those arts first taught by you.
 Oh! may from hence each violated maid,
 By flattering, faithless, barb'rous man betray'd,
 When robb'd of innocence, and virgin fame,
 From your destruction raise a nobler name,
 To right their sex's wrongs devote their mind,
 And future Millwoods prove to plague mankind.

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Room in a Prison.

Enter THOROWGOOD, BLUNT, and LUCY.

THOROWGOOD.

I HAVE recommended to Barnwell a reverend divine,
 whose judgment and integrity I am well acquainted
 with. Nor has Millwood been neglected; but she, un-
 happy woman, still obstinate, refuses his assistance.

Lucy. This pious charity to the afflicted well becomes
 your character; yet pardon me, Sir, if I wonder you
 were not at their trial.

Thor. I knew it was impossible to save him; and I
 and my family bear so great a part in his distress, that
 to have been present would have but aggravated our
 sorrows without relieving his.

Blunt. It was mournful indeed. Barnwell's youth
 and modest deportment, as he passed, drew tears from
 every eye. When placed at the bar, and arraigned be-
 fore the reverend judges, with many tears and inter-
 rupting sobs he confess'd, and aggravated his offences,
 without accusing, or once reflecting on Millwood, the
 shameless author of his ruin. But she, dauntless and
 unconcerned, stood by his side, viewing, with visible
 pride and contempt, the vast assembly, who all, with

sympathising sorrow, wept for the wretched youth. She, when call'd upon to answer, loudly insisted upon her innocence, and made an artful and a bold defence; but, finding all in vain, the impartial jury and the learned bench concurring to find her guilty, how did she curse herself, poor Barnwell, us, her judges, all mankind! But what could that avail? She was condemned, and is this day to suffer with him.

Thor. The time draws on. I am going to visit Barnwell, as you are Millwood.

Lucy. We have not wrong'd her, yet I dread this interview. She's proud, impatient, wrathful, and unforgiving. To be the branded instruments of vengeance, to suffer in her shame, and sympathize with her in all she suffers, is the tribute we must pay for our former ill-spent lives, and long confederacy with her in wickedness.

Thor. Happy for you it ended when it did! What you have done against Millwood I know proceeded from a just abhorrence of her crimes; free from interest, malice, or revenge. Profelytes to virtue should be encouraged; pursue your proposed reformation, and know me hereafter for your friend.

Lucy. This is a blessing as unhop'd for as unmerited. But Heaven, that snatch'd us from impending ruin, sure intends you as its instrument to secure us from apostasy.

Thor. With gratitude to impute your deliverance to Heaven is just. Many less virtuously disposed than Barnwell was, have never fallen in the manner he has done. May not such owe their safety rather to Providence than to themselves? With pity and compassion let us judge him. Great were his faults, but strong was the temptation. Let his ruin teach us diffidence, humanity and circumspection; for if we who wonder at his fate, had like him been tried, like him perhaps we had fallen.

Act V.

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S C E N E II.

A Dungeon, a table and lamp. Barnwell reading.

Enter THOROWGOOD at a distance.

Thor. There see the bitter fruits of Passion's detested reign, and sensual appetite indulged; severe reflections, penitence and tears.

Barn. My honour'd injured Master, whose goodness has covered me a thousand times with shame, forgive this last unwilling disrespect: indeed I saw you not.

Thor. 'Tis well; I hope you were better employed in viewing of yourself; your journey's long, your time for preparation almost spent. I sent a reverend divine to teach you how to improve it, and should be glad to hear of his success.

Barn. The Word of truth which he recommended for my constant companion in this my sad retirement, has at length removed the doubts I laboured under. From thence I've learned the infinite extent of heavenly mercy; that my offences, though great, are not unpardonable; and that it is not my interest only, but my duty, to believe and to rejoice in that hope: so shall Heaven receive the glory, and future penitents the profit of my example.

Thor. Proceed.

Barn. 'Tis wonderful that words should charm despair, speak peace and pardon to a murderer's conscience; but truth and mercy flow in every sentence, attended with force and energy divine. How shall I describe my present state of mind! I hope in doubt, and trembling I rejoice; I feel my grief increase, even as my fears give way. Joy and gratitude now supply more tears, than the horror and anguish of despair before.

Thor. These are the genuine signs of true repentance; the only preparatory, the certain way to everlasting peace. O the joy it gives to see a soul form'd and pre-

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par'd for heaven! For this the faithful minister devotes himself to meditation, abstinence, and prayer, shunning the vain delights of sensual joys, and daily dies, that others may live for ever. For this he turns the sacred volumes over, and spends his life in painful search of truth. The love of riches, and the lust of power, he looks upon with just contempt and detestation; he only counts for wealth the souls he wins, and his highest ambition is to serve mankind. If the reward of all his pains be to preserve one soul from wandering, or turn one from the error of his ways, how does he then rejoice, and own his little labours overpaid!

Barn. What do I owe for all your generous kindness? But though I cannot, Heaven can and will reward you.

Thor. To see thee thus, is joy too great for words. —Farewell.—Heaven strengthen thee!—Farewell.

Barn. O! Sir, there's something I would say, if my sad swelling heart would give me leave.

Thor. Give it vent a while, and try.

Barn. I had a friend—'tis true I am unworthy—yet methinks your generous example might persuade.—Could I not see him once, before I go from whence there's no return?

Thor. He's coming, and as much thy friend as ever. I will not anticipate his sorrow; too soon he'll see the sad effect of this contagious ruin. This torrent of domestic misery bears too hard upon me. I must retire to indulge a weakness I find impossible to overcome. [*Aside.*] Much lov'd—and much lamented youth!—Farewell.—Heaven strengthen thee.—Eternally farewell.

Barn. The best of masters and of men—Farewell. While I live let me not want your prayers.

Thor. Thou shalt not. Thy peace being made with Heaven, death's already vanquish'd. Bear a little longer the pains that attend this transitory life, and cease from pain for ever. [*Exit Thor.*]

Barn. Perhaps I shall. I find a power within, that bears my soul above the fears of death, and, spite of conscious shame and guilt, gives me a taste of pleasure more than mortal.

Enter TRUEMAN and KEEPER.

Keep. Sir, there's the prisoner. *[Exit Keeper.]*

Barn. Trueman!—My friend whom I so wish'd to see, yet now he's here, I dare not look upon him.

True. O Barnwell! Barnwell!

Barn. Mercy! Mercy! gracious Heaven! For death, but not for this, I was prepared.

True. What have I suffered since I saw thee last! What pain hath absence given me!—But oh! to see thee thus!—

Barn. I know it is dreadful! I feel the anguish of thy generous soul:—but I was born to murder all who love me. *[Both weep.]*

True. I came not to reproach you; I thought to bring you comfort; but I'm deceiv'd, for I have none to give: I came to share thy sorrow, but cannot bear my own.

Barn. My sense of guilt indeed you cannot know: 'tis what the good and innocent, like you, can ne'er conceive: but other griefs at present I have none, but what I feel for you. In your sorrow I read you love me still; but yet, methinks, 'tis strange, when I consider what I am.

True. No more of that: I can remember nothing but thy virtues, thy honest, tender friendship, our former happy state and present misery. O! had you trusted me when first the fair seducer tempted you, all might have been prevented.

Barn. Alas! thou knowest not what a wretch I've been. Breach of friendship was my first and least offence: so far was I lost to goodness, so devoted to the author of my ruin, that had she insisted on my murdering thee,—I think—I should have done it.

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True. Pr'ythee, aggravate thy faults no more.

Barn. I think I should! Thus good and generous as you are, I should have murder'd you!

True. We have not yet embraced, and may be interrupted: come to my arms.

Barn. Never, never will I taste such joys on earth; never will I so soothe my just remorse. Are these honest arms and faithful bosom fit to embrace and to support a murderer? These iron fetters only shall clasp, and stony pavement bear me; [*Throwing himself on the ground.*] Even these too good for such a bloody monster.

True. Shall Fortune sever those whom Friendship joined! Thy miseries cannot lay thee so low, but love will find thee. Here will we offer to stern calamity; this place the altar, and ourselves the sacrifice. Our mutual groans shall echo to each other thro' the dreary vault; our sighs shall number the moments as they pass, and mingling tears communicate such anguish, as words were never made to express.

Barn. Then be it so. [*Rising.*] Since you propose an intercourse of woe, pour all your griefs into my breast, and in exchange take mine. [*Embracing.*] Where's now the anguish that you promis'd? You've taken mine, and make me no return. Sure peace and comfort dwell within these arms, and sorrow can't approach me while I am here. This too is the work of Heaven; which having before spoke peace and pardon to me, now sends thee to confirm it. O take, take some of the joy that overflows my breast!

True. I do, I do. Almighty Power! how hast thou made us capable to bear at once the extremes of pleasure and of pain?

Act V

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Enter KEEPER.

Keep. Sir.

True. I come.

[Exit Keeper.]

Barn. Must you leave me? Death would soon have parted us for ever.

True. O my Barnwell! there's yet another task behind: again your heart must bleed for others woes.

Barn. To meet and part with you I thought was all I had to do on earth: what is there more for me to do or suffer?

True. I dread to tell thee, yet it must be known: Maria.

Barn. Our master's fair and virtuous daughter?—

True. The same.

Barn. No misfortune, I hope, has reach'd that lovely maid! Preserve her, Heaven, from every ill, to shew mankind that goodness is your care.

True. Thy, thy misfortunes, my unhappy friend, have reach'd her. Whatever you and I have felt, and more, if more be possible, she feels for you.

Barn. I know he doth abhor a lie, and would not trifle with his dying friend. This is indeed the bitterness of death.

[Aside.]

True. You must remember (for we all observ'd it) for some time past, a heavy melancholy weigh'd her down. Disconsolate she seem'd, and pin'd and languish'd from a cause unknown; 'till, hearing of your dreadful fate, the long stifled flame blaz'd out; she wept, and wrung her hands, and tore her hair, and in the transport of her grief discover'd her own lost state, while she lamented yours.

Barn. Will all the pain I feel restore thy ease, lovely unhappy maid! *[Weeping.]* Why did you not let me die, and never know it?

True. It was impossible. She makes no secret of her passion for you; she is determin'd to see you ere you die, and waits for me to introduce her.

[Exit Trueman.]

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Barn. Vain, busy thoughts, be still! What avails it to think on what I might have been? I now am—what I've made myself.

Enter TRUEMAN with MARIA.
True. Madam, reluctant I lead you to this dismal scene. This is the seat of misery and guilt. Here awful Justice reserves her public victims. This is the entrance to shameful death.

Mar. To this sad place then, no improper guest, the abandon'd lost Maria brings despair. And see the subject and the cause of all this world of woe. Silent and motionless he stands, as if his soul had quitted her abode, and the lifeless form alone was left behind; yet that so perfect, that beauty and death, ever at enmity, now seem united there.

Barn. I groan, but murmur not. Just Heaven! I am your own; do with me what you please.

Mar. Why are your streaming eyes still fix'd below, as though thou'dst give the greedy earth thy sorrows, and rob me of my due? Were happiness within your power, you should bestow it where you pleas'd; but in your misery I must and will partake.

Barn. Oh! say not so, but fly, abhor, and leave me to my fate. Consider what you are, how vast your fortune, and how bright your fame. Have pity on your youth, your beauty, and unequal'd virtue; for which so many noble peers have sigh'd in vain. Bless with your charms some honourable lord. Adorn with your beauty, and by your example improve, the English court, that justly claims such merit; so shall I quickly be to you—as tho' I had never been.

Mar. When I forget you, I must be so indeed. Reason, choice, virtue, all forbid it. Let women like Millwood, if there are more such women, smile in prosperity, and in adversity forsake. Be it the pride of virtue to repair, or to partake, the ruin such have made.

True. Lovely ill-fated maid! Was there ever such

Act V.

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generous distress before! How must this pierce his grateful heart, and aggravate his woes!

Barn. Ere I knew guilt or shame, when Fortune smiled, and when my youthful hopes were at the highest; if then to have raised my thoughts to you, had been presumption in me never to have been pardoned, think how much beneath yourself you condescend to regard me now.

Mar. Let her blush, who proffering love, invades the freedom of your sex's choice, and meanly sues in hopes of a return. Your inevitable fate hath render'd hope impossible as vain. Then why shou'd I fear to avow a passion so just and so disinterested?

True. If any shou'd take occasion from Millwood's crimes to libel the best and fairest part of the creation, here let them see their error. The most distant hopes of such a tender passion from so bright a maid, might add to the happiness of the most happy, and make the greatest proud; yet here 'tis lavish'd in vain. Though by the rich present the generous donor is undone, he on whom it is bestow'd receives no benefit.

Barn. So the aromatic spices of the East, which all the living covet and esteem, are with unavailing kindness wasted on the dead.

Mar. Yes, fruitless is my love, and unavailing all my sighs and tears. Can they save thee from approaching death?—from such a death?—O terrible idea! What is her misery and distress, who sees the first, last object of her love, for whom alone she'd live, for whom she'd die a thousand thousand deaths, if it were possible, expiring in her arms! Yet she is happy, when compar'd to me. Were millions of worlds mine, I'd gladly give them all in exchange for her condition. The most consummate woe is light to mine. The last of curses to other miserable minds, is all I ask for my relief, and that's deny'd me.

True. Time and reflection cure all ills.

Mar. All but this. His dreadful catastrophe virtue herself abhors. To give a holiday to suburb slaves, and

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passing entertain the savage herd, who elbowing each other for a sight, pursue and press upon him like his fate! — A mind with piety and resolution arm'd may smile on death: — but public ignominy, everlasting shame, shame the death of souls, to die a thousand times, and yet survive even death itself in never-dying infamy — Is this to be endured? — Can I who live in him, and must each hour of my devoted life, feel all these woes renew'd — Can I endure this?

True. Grief has so impair'd her spirits, she pants, as in the agonies of death.

Barn. Preserve her, Heaven, and restore her peace: nor let her death be added to my crimes. [*Bell-tolls.*] I am summon'd to my fate.

Enter KEEPER and Officers.

Keep. Sir, the officers attend you. Millwood is already summon'd.

Barn. Tell 'em, I'm ready. And now, my friend, farewell. [*Embracing.*] Support and comfort, the best you can, this mourning fair. — No more — I forget not to pray for me. [*Turning to Maria.*] Would you, bright Excellence, permit me the honour of a chaste embrace, the last happiness this world cou'd give were mine. [*She inclines towards him; they embrace.*] Exalted Goodness! O turn your eyes from earth and me to heaven, where virtue, like yours, is ever heard: pray for the peace of my departing soul. Early my race of wickedness began, and soon I reach'd the summit. Ere Nature has finish'd her work, and stamp'd me man, just at the time when others begin to stray, my course is finish'd. Though short my span of life, and few my days; yet count my crimes for years, and I have liv'd whole ages. Thus justice, in compassion to mankind, cuts off a wretch like me, by one such example to secure thousands from future ruin. Justice and mercy are in heaven the same; its utmost severity is mercy to the whole; thereby to cure man's folly, and presumptions, which else wou'd render even infinite mercy vain and ineffectual.

If any youth, like you, in future times
 Shall mourn my fate, tho' he abhors my crimes,
 Or tender maid, like you, my tale shall hear,
 And to my sorrows give a pitying tear,
 To each such melting eye and throbbing heart,
 Would gracious Heav'n this benefit impart,
 Never to know my guilt, nor feel my pain:
 Then must you own, you ought not to complain.
 Since you nor weep, nor shall I die in vain.

[Exeunt Barnwell and Officers.]

SCENE, the Last.

The Place of execution. The gallows and ladders at the further end of the stage. A crowd of Spectators, BLUNT and LUCY.

Lucy. Heavens! what a throng!

Blunt. How terrible is death when thus prepar'd!

Lucy. Support them, Heaven; thou only canst support them; all other help is vain.

Officer within. Make way there, make way, and give the prisoners room.

Lucy. They are here. Observe them well. How humble and composed young Barnwell seems! But Millwood looks wild, ruffled with passion, confounded and amazed.

Enter BARNWELL, MILLWOOD, Officers, and Executioners.

Barn. See, Millwood, see, our journey's at an end: life, like a tale that's told, is past away. That short, but dark and unknown passage, death, is all the space 'tween us and endless joys, or woes eternal.

Mill. Is this the end of all my flattering hopes? were youth and beauty giv'n me for a curse, and wisdom only to insure my ruin? they were, they were. Heaven, thou hast done thy worst. Or, if thou hast in

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store some untried plague, somewhat that's worse than shame, despair and death, unpitied death, confirm'd despair, and soul-confounding shame; something that men and angels can't describe, and only fiends, who bear it, can conceive; now, pour it out on this devoted head; that I may feel the worst thou canst inflict, and bid defiance to thy utmost power.

Barn. Yet ere we pass the dreadful gulf of death; yet ere you're plunged in everlasting woe, O bend your stubborn knees, and harder heart, humbly to deprecate the wrath divine. Who knows but Heaven, in your dying moments, may bestow that grace and mercy which your life despised?

Mill. Why name you mercy to a wretch like me? mercy's beyond my hope, almost beyond my wish. I can't repent, nor ask to be forgiven.

Barn. O think what 'tis to be for ever, ever miserable, nor with vain pride oppose a power that's able to destroy you.

Mill. That will destroy me: I feel it will. A deluge of wrath is pouring on my soul. Chains, darkness, wheels, racks, sharp-stinging scorpions, molten lead, and seas of sulphur, are light to what I feel.

Barn. O! add not to your vast account despair: a sin more injurious to Heaven, than all you've yet committed.

Mill. O! I have sinn'd beyond the reach of mercy.

Barn. O say not so: 'tis blasphemy to think it. As yon bright roof is higher than the earth, so and much more does Heaven's goodness pass our apprehension. O what created being shall presume to circumscribe mercy that knows no bounds!

Mill. This yields no hope. Though pity may be boundless, yet 'tis free: I was doom'd before the world began to endless pains, and thou to joys eternal.

Barn. O gracious Heaven! extend thy mercy to her: let thy rich mercy flow in plenteous streams, to chase her fears, and heal her wounded soul.

Mill. It will not be: your prayers are lost in air, or

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else returned perhaps with double blessings to your bosom: They help not me.

Barn. Yet hear me, Millwood.

Mill. Away, I will not hear thee: I tell thee, youth, I am by Heaven devoted a dreadful instance of his power to punish. [*Barnwell seems to pray.*] If thou wilt pray, pray for thyself, not me. How doth his fervent soul mount with his words, and both ascend to heaven! that heaven, whose gates are shut with adamantine bars against my prayers, had I the will to pray, I cannot bear it. Sure 'tis the worst of torments to behold others enjoy that bliss which we must never taste.

Off. The utmost limit of your time's expired.

Mill. Encompassed with horror, whither must I go? I would not live—nor die—That I could cease to be—or ne'er had been!

Barn. Since peace and comfort are denied her here, may she find mercy where she least expects it, and this be all her hell. From our example may all be taught to fly the first approach of vice; but if o'ertaken

By strong temptation, weakness, or surprize,
Lament their guilt, and by repentance rise.

Th' impenitent alone die unforgiv'n:

To sin's like man, and to forgive like Heav'n.

Enter TRUEMAN.

Lucy. Heart-breaking sight! O wretched, wretched Millwood!

True. How is she disposed to meet her fate?

Blunt. Who can describe unutterable woe!

Lucy. She goes to death encompassed with horror, loathing life, and yet afraid to die: no tongue can tell her anguish and despair.

True. Heaven be better to her than her fears! May she prove a warning to others, a monument of mercy in herself!

Lucy. O sorrow insupportable! break, break my heart!

True. In vain

With bleeding hearts, and weeping eyes we shew
A human gen'rous sense of others woe;
Unless we mark what drew their ruin on,
And by avoiding that,——prevent our own.

Exeunt omnes.

This play is written in prose; and although the language is consequently not so dignified as that of the Buskin is usually expected to be, yet it is well adapted to the subject: it is written on, and exalted enough to express the sentiments of the characters, which are all thrown into domestic life. The plot is ingenious, the catastrophe just, and the conduct of it affecting. And no lesson surely can be more proper or indeed more necessary to inculcate among that valuable body of youths, who are trained up to the branches of mercantile business, so eminently estimable in a land of commerce such as England, and who must necessarily have large trusts confided to their care, and consequently large temptation thrown in the way of their integrity, than the warning them how much greater strength will be added to these temptations, how almost impossible it will be for them to avoid the snares of ruin, if they suffer themselves but once to be drawn aside into the paths of the harlot, or permit their eyes once to glance on the allurements of the wanton, where they will be sure to meet with the most insatiable avarice to cope with on one hand, and an unguarded sensibility proceeding at first from the goodness of their own hearts, on the other, which will excite the practice of the most abandon'd artifices in the first, and render the last most liable to be imposed on by them, and plunge headlong into vice, infamy and ruin. This warning is strongly, loudly giv'n in this play; and indeed I cannot help wishing that the performance of it was more frequent, or at least that the managers would make it a rule constantly to have it acted once at least in each house during the course of every period of those holydays, in which the very youth to whom this instruction is addressed almost always form a considerable part of the audience.

Comp. to the Playhouse.

The
But
Cock

EPICURE.

Written by

COLLEY CIBBER, Esq, Post Laureat;

And spoken by Mrs. CIBBER.

SINCE Fate has robb'd me of the hapless youth,

For whom my heart had boarded up its truth;

By all the laws of love and honour, now,

I'm free again to chuse—and one of you.

But soft—With caution first I'll round me peep:

Madam, in my case, I should look before they leap.

Here's choice enough, of various sorts and hue,

The cit, the wit, the rake cock'd up in cue,

The fair spruce mercer, and the sawny Jew.

Suppose I search the spider gallery,——No;

There's none but prentices, and cuckolds all a row;

And these, I doubt, are those that make 'em so,

[Pointing to the Boxes.

'Tis very well, enjoy the jest;——But you,

Fine powder'd sparks,——nay, I am told 'tis true,

Your happy spouses——can make cuckolds too.

Point to you and them the diff'rence this perhaps,

The cit's ashamed whene'er his duck be traps,

But you, when Madam's tripping, let her fall,

Cock up your bats, and take no shame at all.

EPILOGUE

*What if some favour'd poet I cou'd meet?
Whose love wou'd lay his laurels at my feet.*

*No——— painted passions real love abhors———
His flame wou'd prove the suit of creditors.*

*Not to detain you then with longer pause,
In short, my heart to this conclusion draws;
I yield it to the hand that's loudest in applause.*

END OF GEORGE BARNWELL.

THE
DOUBLE DEALER.

A
COMEDY.

BY
WILLIAM CONGREVE.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by and for MARTIN & WOTHERSPOON.

M. DCC. LXXIII.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHARLES MONTAGUE
Duke of Montagu of the Treasury

SIR
I HEARILY wish this day were as happy as I
wished it, that I might have the more worthy your
acquaintance and that the devotion of me to you might be
more becoming your honour and esteem which I wish
every body who is so fortunate as to know you, have
for you. It is your constant duty when yet unasked
and now it is more obliged it is your duty to
I would not have any body imagine that I think
only without as faintly as I am conscious of to
I could I desired to have your company and
I should like to have with me a true and regular
company, but I found it as necessary as I find
mind of — I wish I could have your company
And now, to make known to the world of such a
sign, I do count on the attempt and the important
performance. Yes I will take the opportunity to
have this in mind in the case of the
out of it is necessary. I wish I could have your
my as a public way to be having a book's record
ing to the most laid down before him, or a garden
that he has let his bowers in a room of rich or rich
figure. I designed the most with and to that most
I invented the table, and do not know that I have
showed one hint of it any where. I made the plot as
strong as I could, because it was mine, and I made it
single, because I would avoid confusion, and was re-
solved to preserve the true names of the drama. Still
this discourse is very impertinent to you, whose judg-
ment much surpasses all the rest, and I can ex-
cuse them, and who good nature like me, I have
will find out the hidden meaning of these words
(such) which it would be great impertinence in me to dis-
cover. I think I don't speak improperly when I call
you a lover of Poetry, for it is very well known the

TO the RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHARLES MONTAGUE,
One of the LORDS of the Treasury.

S I R,

I HEARTILY wish this play were as perfect as I intended it, that it might be more worthy your acceptance, and that my dedication of it to you might be more becoming that honour and esteem which I, with every body who is so fortunate as to know you, have for you. It had your countenance when yet unknown, and now it is made public, it wants your protection.

I would not have any body imagine that I think this play without its faults, for I am conscious of several. I confess I designed (whatever vanity or ambition occasioned that design) to have written a true and regular comedy, but I found it an undertaking which put me in mind of—*Sudet multum, frustra que laboret ausus idem.* And now, to make amends for the vanity of such a design, I do confess both the attempt and the imperfect performance. Yet I must take the boldness to say, I have not miscarried in the whole, for the mechanical part of it is regular. That I may say with as little vanity, as a builder may say he has built a house according to the model laid down before him; or a gardener, that he has set his flowers in a knot of such or such a figure. I designed the moral first, and to that moral I invented the fable, and do not know that I have borrowed one hint of it any where. I made the plot as strong as I could, because it was single; and I made it single, because I would avoid confusion, and was resolved to preserve the three unities of the drama. Sir, this discourse is very impertinent to you, whose judgment much better can discern the faults than I can excuse them, and whose good nature, like that of a lover, will find out those hidden beauties (if there are any such) which it would be great immodesty in me to discover. I think I don't speak improperly when I call you a *lover of Poetry*, for it is very well known she has

been a very kind mistress to you; she has not denied you the last favour, and she has been fruitful to you in a most beautiful issue.—If I break off abruptly here, I hope every body will understand that it is to avoid a commendation, which, as it is your due, would be most easy for me to pay, and too troublesome for you to receive.

I have, since the acting of this play, hearkened after the objections which have been made to it; for I was conscious where a true critic might have put me upon my defence, I was prepared for the attack, and am pretty confident I could have vindicated some parts, and excused others; and where there were any plain miscarriages, I would most ingenuously have confessed them. But I have not heard any thing said sufficient to provoke an answer. That which looks most like an objection, does not relate in particular to this play, but to all or most that ever have been written; and that is soliloquy. Therefore I will answer it, not only for my own sake, but to save others the trouble, to whom it may hereafter be objected.

I grant that for a man to talk to himself appears absurd and unnatural, and indeed it is so in most cases; but the circumstances which may attend the occasion make great alteration. It oftentimes happens to a man to have designs which require him to himself, and in their nature cannot admit of a confidant. Such, for certain, is all villainy; and other less mischievous intentions may be very improper to be communicated to a second person. In such a case therefore the audience must observe, whether the person upon the stage takes any notice of them at all or no: for if he supposes any one to be by when he talks to himself, it is monstrous and ridiculous to the last degree. Nay, not only in this case, but in any part of a play, if there is expressed any knowledge of an audience it is insufferable: but otherwise, when a man in soliloquy reasons with himself, and *pro's* and *con's*, and weighs all his designs, we ought not to imagine that this man either talks to us or to himself; he is only thinking, and thinking such matter as were inexcusable folly in him to speak. But be-

D E D I C A T I O N.

cause we are concealed spectators of the plot in agitation, and the poet finds it necessary to let us know the whole mystery of his contrivance, he is willing to inform us of this person's thoughts, and to that end is forced to make use of the expedient of speech, no other better way being yet invented for the communication of thought.

Another very wrong objection has been made by some who have not taken leisure to distinguish the characters. The hero of the play, as they are pleased to call him, (meaning Mellefont) is a gull, and made a fool, and cheated. Is every man a gull and a fool that is deceived? At that rate I'm afraid the two classes of men will be reduced to one, and the knaves themselves be at a loss to justify their title: but if an open-hearted honest man, who has an entire confidence in one whom he takes to be his friend, and whom he has obliged to be so, and who (to confirm him in his opinion) in all appearance, and upon several trials has been so; if this man be deceived by the treachery of the other, must he of necessity commence fool immediately, only because the other has proved a villain? Ay, but there was caution given to Mellefont in the first act, by his friend Careless. Of what nature was that caution? only to give the audience some light into the character of Maskwell before his appearance, and not to convince Mellefont of his treachery, for that was more than Careless was then able to do: he never knew Maskwell guilty of any villainy, he was only a sort of man which he did not like. As for his suspecting his familiarity with my Lady Touchwood, let them examine the answer that Mellefont makes him, and compare it with the conduct of Maskwell's character through the play.

I would beg them again to look into the character of Maskwell before they accuse Mellefont of weakness for being deceived by him. For, upon summing up the enquiry into this objection, it may be found they have mistaken cunning in one character for folly in another.

But there is one thing, at which I am more concerned than all the false criticisms that are made upon me,

and that is, some of the ladies are offended. I am heartily sorry for it; for I declare I would rather disoblige all the critics of the world than one of the fair sex. They are concerned that I have represented some women vicious and affected: how can I help it? It is the business of a comic poet to paint the vices and follies of human-kind, and there are but two sexes, male and female, *men* and *women*, which have a title to humanity, and if I leave one half of them out the work will be imperfect. I should be very glad of an opportunity to make my compliment to those ladies who are offended; but they can no more expect it in a comedy, than to be tickled by a surgeon when he is letting them blood. They who are virtuous or discreet should not be offended; for such characters as these distinguish *them*, and make their beauties more shining and observed; and they who are of the other kind may nevertheless pass for such, by seeming not to be displeased, or touched with the satire of this *Comedy*. Thus have they also wrongfully accused me of doing them a prejudice, when I have in reality done them a service.

You will pardon me, Sir, for the freedom I take of making answers to other people, in an epistle which ought to be wholly sacred to you; but since I intend the play to be so too, I hope I may take the more liberty of justifying it, where it is in the right.

I must now, Sir, declare to the world, how kind you have been to my endeavours; for in regard of what was well meant, you have excused what was ill performed. I beg you would continue the same method in your acceptance of this dedication. I know no other way of making a return to that humanity you shewed, in protecting an infant, but by enrolling it in your service, now that it is of age and come into the world. Therefore be pleased to accept of this as an acknowledgment of the favour you have shewn me, and an earnest of the real service and gratitude of,

S I R,

Your most obliged, humble servant,

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

PROLOGUE

Spoken by Mrs BRACEGIRDLE

MOORS have this way, (as story tells), to know

Whether their brats are truly got or no;

Into the sea the new-born babe is thrown,

There, as Instinct directs, to swim or drown.

A barbarous device, to try if spouse

Has kept religiously her nuptial vows.

Such are the trials poets make of plays;

Only they trust to more inconstant seas;

So does our Author this his child commit

To the tempestuous mercy of the pit,

To know if it be truly born of Wit.

Critics, avout, for you are fish of prey,

And feed, like sharks, upon an infant play.

Be ev'ry monster of the deep away;

Let's have a fair trial, and a clear sea.

Let Nature work, and do not damn too soon,

For life will struggle long ere it sink down,

And will at least rise thrice before it drown.

Let us consider, had it been our fate,

Thus hardly to be prov'd legitimate!

I will not say we'd all in danger been,

Were each to suffer for his mother's sin;

But, by my troth, I cannot avoid thinking,

How nearly some good men might have 'scap'd sinking.

But, Heav'n be prais'd, this custom is confin'd

Alone to th' offspring of the Muses' kind;

Our Christian cuckolds are more bent to pity;

I know not one Moor husband in the city:

It's good man's arms the chopping bastard thrives,

For he thinks all his own that is his wife's;

Whatever fate is for this Play design'd,

The Poet's sure he shall some comfort find;

For if his Muse has play'd him false, the worst

That can befall him is to be divorc'd.

You husbands, judge, if that be to be curs'd.

Dramatis Personæ.

MASKWELL, a villain, pretended friend to Mellefont, gallant to Lady Touchwood, and in love with Cynthia.

LORD TOUCHWOOD, uncle to Mellefont.

MELLEFONT, promised to, and in love with Cynthia.

CARELESS, his friend.

LORD FROTH, a solemn coxcomb.

BRISK, a pert coxcomb.

SIR PAUL PLYANT, an uxorious, foolish, old knight, brother to Lady Touchwood, and father to Cynthia.

LADY TOUCHWOOD, in love with Mellefont.

CYNTHIA, daughter to Sir Paul by a former wife, promised to Mellefont.

LADY FROTH, a great coquette, pretender to poetry, wit, and learning.

LADY PLYANT, insolent to her husband, and easy to any pretender.

Chaplain, Boy, Footmen, and Attendants.

The SCENE, a Gallery in Lord Touchwood's house, with chambers adjoining.

THE DOUBLE DEALER.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Gallery in Lord Touchwood's House, with chambers adjoining.

Enter CARELESS, crossing the stage, with his hat, gloves and sword in his hands, as just risen from table: MELLEFONT following him.

MELLEFONT.

NED, Ned, whither so fast? What, turn'd flincher? Why, you wo'not leave us?

Care. Where are the women? I'm weary of guzling, and begin to think them the better company.

Mel. Then thy reason staggers, and thou'rt almost drunk.

Care. No, faith; but your foels grow noisy—and if a man must endure the noise of words without sense, I think the women have more musical voices, and become nonsense better.

Mel. Why, they are at the end of the gallery, retir'd to their tea and scandal; according to their ancient custom, after dinner.—But I made a pretence to follow you, because I had something to say to you in private, and I am not like to have many opportunities this evening.

Care. And here's this coxcomb most critically come to interrupt you.

S C E N E II.

To them BRISK.

Brisk. Boys, boys, lads, where are you? what, do you give ground? mortgage for a bottle, ha? Careless, this is your trick; you're always spoiling company by leaving it.

Care. And thou art always spoiling company by coming into't.

Brisk. Pooh, ha, ha, ha! I know you envy me. Spite, proud spite, by the Gods! and burning envy—I'll be judg'd by Mellefont here, who gives and takes raillery.

TO The DOUBLE DEALER. ACT II.

Better, you or I. Pshaw, man, when I say you spoil company by leaving it, I mean you leave nobody for the company to laugh at. I think there I was with you, ha, Mellefont.

Mel. O' my word, Brisk, that was a home thrust; you have silenc'd him.

Brisk. Oh, my dear Mellefont, let me perish, if thou art not the soul of conversation, the very essence of wit, and spirit of wine—the duce take me if there were three good things said, or one understood, since thy amputation from the body of our society—he, I think that's pretty and metaphorical enough: I'gad I could not have said it out of thy company—Careless, ha?

Care. Hum, ay, what is't?

Brisk. O, *Môn cœur!* what is't! Nay, gad I'll punish you for want of apprehension: the duce take me if I tell you.

Mel. No, no, hang him, he has no taste.—But, dear Brisk, excuse me, I have a little business.

Care. Pr'ythee get thee gone; thou see'st we are serious.

Mel. We'll come immediately, if you'll but go in, and keep up good humour and sense in the company: pr'ythee do, they'll fall asleep else.

Brisk. I'gad so they will—well, I will, I will: gad you shall command me from the Zenith to the Nadir.—But the duce take me if I say a good thing 'till you come,—but pr'ythee dear rogue, make haste, pr'ythee make haste; I shall burst else.—And yonder your uncle, my Lord Touchwood, swears he'll disinherit you, and Sir Paul Plyant threatens to disclaim you for a son-in-law, and my Lord Froth won't dance at your wedding to-morrow; nor the duce take me, I won't write your Epithalamium, and see what a condition you're like to be brought to.

Mel. Well, I'll speak but three words and follow you.

Brisk. Enough, enough; Careless, bring your apprehension along with you.

S C E N E III.

MELLEFONT, CARELESS.

Care. Pert coxcomb!

Mel. Faith 'tis a good-natur'd coxcomb and has very

ACT I. The DOUBLE DEALER. 11

entertaining follies, you must be more humane to him; at this juncture it will do me service. I'll tell you, I would have mirth continued this day at any rate; tho' patience purchase folly, and attention be paid with noise, there are times when sense may be unreasonable as well as truth. Pr'ythee do thou wear none to-day, but allow Brisk to have wit, that thou mayst seem a fool.

Cara. Why, how now; why this extravagant proposition?

Mel. O, I would have no room for serious design, for I am jealous of a plot. I would have noise and impertinence keep my Lady Touchwood's head from working, for hell is no more busy than her brain, nor contains more devils than that imaginations.

Cara. I thought your fear of her had been over—Is not to-morrow appointed for your marriage with Cynthia, and her father, Sir Paul Plyant, come to settle the writings this day on purpose?

Mel. True; but you shall judge whether I have not reason to be alarm'd. None besides you and Maskwell are acquainted with the secret of my aunt Touchwood's violent passion for me. Since my first refusal of her addresses she has endeavour'd to do me all ill offices with my uncle, yet has manag'd 'em with that subtilty that to him they have borne the face of kindness; while her malice, like a dark lanthorn, only shone upon me where it was directed. Still it gave me less perplexity to prevent the success of her displeasure than to avoid the importunities of her love; and of two evils, I thought myself favour'd in her aversion: but whether urg'd by her despair, and the short prospect of time she saw to accomplish her designs; whether the hopes of revenge, or of her love, terminated in the view of this my marriage with Cynthia, I know not; but this morning she surpriz'd me in my bed.——

Cara. Was there ever such a fury! 'tis well Nature has not put it in her sex's power to ravish.——Well, bless us! proceed. What follow'd?

Mel. What at first amaz'd me; for I look'd to have seen her in all the transports of a slighted and revengeful wo-

man; but when I expected thunder from her voice, and lightening in her eyes, I saw her melted into tears, and hush'd into a sigh. It was long before either of us spoke; Passion had ty'd her tongue, and Amazement mine.—In short, the consequence was thus, she omitted nothing that the most violent love could urge, or tender words express; which, when she saw had no effect, but still I pleaded honour and nearness of blood to my uncle, then came the storm I fear'd at first; for starting from my bedside like a fury, she flew to my sword, and with much ado I prevented her doing me or herself a mischief: having disarm'd her, in a gust of passion she left me, and in a resolution, confirm'd by a thousand curses, not to close her eyes 'till they had seen my ruin.

Care. Exquisite woman! But, what the devil, does she think thou hast no more sense than to get an heir upon her body to disinherit thyself? for as I take it this settlement upon you, is, with a proviso, that your uncle have no children.

Mel. It is so. Well, the service you are to do me will be a pleasure to yourself. I must get you to engage my Lady Plyant all this evening, that my pious aunt may not work her to her interest; and if you chance to secure her to yourself, you may incline her to mine. She's handsome, and knows it; is very silly, and thinks she has sense, and has an old fond husband.

Care. I confess, a very fair foundation for a lover to build upon.

Mel. For my Lord Froth, he and his wife will be sufficiently taken up with admiring one another, and Brisk's gallantry, as they call it. I'll observe my uncle myself; and Jack Maskwell has promised me to watch my aunt narrowly, and give me notice upon any suspicion. As for Sir Paul, my wife father-in-law that is to be, my dear Cynthia has such a share in his fatherly fondness, he would scarce make her a moment uneasy to have her happy hereafter.

Care. So, you have mann'd your works: but I wish you may not have the weakest guard where the enemy is strongest.

ACT I. THE DOUBLE DEALER. 13

Mel. Maskwell, you mean; pr'ythee why should you suspect him?

Care. Faith I cannot help it, you know I never lik'd him; I am a little superstitious in physiognomy.

Mel. He has obligations of gratitude, to bind him to me; his dependence upon my uncle is through my means.

Care. Upon your aunt, you mean.

Mel. My aunt!

Care. I'm mistaken if there be not a familiarity between them, you do not suspect; notwithstanding her passion for you.

Mel. Pooh, pooh, nothing in the world but his design to do me service; and he endeavours to be well in her esteem, that he may be able to effect it.

Care. Well, I shall be glad to be mistaken; but your aunt's aversion in her revenge cannot be any way so effectually shewn, as in bringing forth a child to disinherit you. She is handsome and cunning, and naturally wanton. Maskwell is flesh and blood at best, and opportunities between them are frequent. His affection to you, you have confessed, is grounded upon his interest, that you have transplanted; and should it take root in my Lady, I don't see what you can expect from the fruit.

Mel. I confess the consequence is visible, were your suspicions just.—But see, the company is broke up, let's meet 'em.

S C E N E IV.

To them Lord TOUCHWOOD, Lord FROTH, Sir PAUL PLYANT, and BRISK.

L. Touch. Out upon't, nephew—leave your father-in-law and me to maintain our ground against young people.

Mel. I beg your Lordship's pardon—We were just returning.——

Sir Paul. Were you, son? Gadsbud, much better as it is—Good, strange! I swear I'm almost tipsy—t'other bottle would have been too powerful for me,—as sure as can be it would.—We wanted your company: but Mr Brisk—where is he? I swear and vow, he's a most facetious person—and the best company.—And my Lord Froth, your Lordship is so merry—a man, he, he, he.

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L. Froth. O foy, Sir Paul, what do you mean? Merry! O barbarous! I'd as lieve you call'd me fool.

Sir Paul. Nay, I protest and vow now, 'tis true; when Mr Brisk jokes, your Lordship's laugh does so become you, he, he, he.

L. Froth. Ridiculous! Sir Paul, you're strangely mistaken, I find Champagne is powerful. I assure you, Sir Paul, I laugh at no body's jest but my own, or a lady's; I assure you, Sir Paul.

Brisk. How? how, my Lord? what, affront my wit! Let me perish, do I never say any thing worthy to be laugh'd at?

L. Froth. O foy, don't misapprehend me, I don't say so, for I often smile at your conceptions. But there is nothing more unbecoming a man of quality, than to laugh; 'tis such a vulgar expression of the passion! every body can laugh. Then especially to laugh at the jest of an inferior person, or when any body else of the same quality does not laugh with one; ridiculous! to be pleased with what pleases the croud! now when I laugh, I always laugh alone.

Brisk. I suppose that's because you laugh at your own jests, i'gad, ha, ha, ha.

L. Froth. He, he, I swear tho' your raillery provokes me to a smile.

Brisk. Ay, my Lord, it's a sign I hit you in the teeth, if you shew 'em.

L. Froth. He, he, he, I swear that's so very pretty, I can't forbear.

Care. I find a quibble bears more sway in your Lordship's face, than a jest.

L. Touch. Sir Paul, if you please we'll retire to the Ladies, and drink a dish of tea, to settle our heads.

Sir Paul. With all my heart. — Mr Brisk, you'll come to us, — or call me when you joke, I'll be ready to laugh incontinently.

S C E N E V.

MELLEFONT, CARELESS, Lord FROTH, BRISK.

Mel. But does your Lordship never see comedies?

L. Froth. O yes, sometimes, — But I never laugh.

Mel. No?

L. Froth. Oh, no,—Never laugh indeed, Sir.

Care. No! why, what do you go there for?

L. Froth. To distinguish myself from the commonalty, and mortify the poets; the fellows grow so conceited, when any of their foolish wit prevails upon the side-boxes—I swear,—he, he, he, I have often constrain'd my inclinations to laugh,—he, he, he, to avoid giving them encouragement.

Mel. You are cruel to yourself, my Lord, as well as malicious to them.

L. Froth. I confess I did myself some violence at first; but now, I think I have conquer'd it.

Brisk. Let me perish, my Lord, but there is something very particular in the humour; 'tis true, it makes against wit, and I'm sorry for some friends of mine that write; but—I'gad, I love to be malicious—Nay, duce take me there's wit in't too—And wit must be foil'd by wit; cut a diamond with a diamond; no other way, I'gad.

L. Froth. Oh, I thought you would not be long before you found out the wit.

Care. Wit! in what? Where the devil's the wit in not laughing when a man has a mind to't?

Brisk. O Lord, why, can't you find it out?—Why there 'tis, in the not laughing—Don't you apprehend me?—My Lord, Careless is a very honest fellow, but hark'ye, you understand me, somewhat heavy, a little shallow, or so.—Why, I'll tell you now, suppose now you come up to me—Nay, pr'ythee, Careless, be instructed. Suppose, as I was saying, you come up to me holding your sides, and laughing, as if you would—Well—I look grave, and ask the cause of this immoderate mirth—You laugh on still, and are not able to tell me—Still I look grave, not so much as smile.——

Care. Smile, no, what the devil should you smile at, when you suppose I can't tell you!

Brisk. Pshaw, pshaw, pr'ythee don't interrupt me.—But I tell you, you shall tell me—at last—But it shall be a great while first.

Care. Well, but pr'ythee don't let it be a great while, because I long to have it over.

Brisk. Well then, you tell me some good jest, or very

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Brisk. Well then, you tell me some good jest, or very

16 The DOUBLE DEALER. ACT I.

witty thing, laughing all the while as if you were ready to die—and I hear it, and laugh thus—Would not you be disappointed?

Care. No; for if it were a witty thing, I should not expect you to understand it.

L. Froth. O foy, Mr Careless, all the world allows Mr Brisk to have wit, my wife says he has a great deal. I hope you think her a judge.

Brisk. Pooh, my Lord, his voice goes for nothing.—I can't tell how to make him apprehend.—Take it t'other way. Suppose I say a witty thing to you?

Care. Then I shall be disappointed indeed.

Mel. Let him alone, Brisk, he is obstinately bent not to be instructed.

Brisk. I'm sorry for him, the duce take me.

Mel. Shall we go to the Ladies, my Lord?

L. Froth. With all my heart; methinks we are a solitude without 'em.

Mel. Or, what say you to another bottle of champagne?

L. Froth. O, for the universe, not a drop more I beseech you. O intemperate! I have a flushing in my face already. *[Takes out a pocket glass and looks in it.]*

Brisk. Let me see, let me see, my Lord, I broke my glass that was in the lid of my snuff-box. Hum! duce take me, I have encourag'd a pimple here too.

[Takes the glass and looks.]

L. Froth. Then you must mortify him with a patch; my wife shall supply you. Come, Gentlemen, *adieu*, here is company coming.

S C E N E VI.

Lady TOUCHWOOD and MASKWELL.

La. Touch. I'll hear no more.—Y're false and ungrateful; come, I know you false.

Mask. I have been frail, I confess, Madam, for your Ladyship's service.

La. Touch. That I should trust a man, whom I had known betray his friend!

Mask. What friend have I betray'd? Or to whom?

La. Touch. Your fond friend Mellefont, and to me; can you deny it?

Mask. I do not.

La. Touch. Have you not wrong'd my Lord, who has been a father to you in your wants, and given you being? Have you not wrong'd him in the highest manner, in his bed?

Mask. With your Ladyship's help, and for your service, as I told you before. I can't deny that neither.—Any thing more, Madam?

La. Touch. More! audacious villain! O, what's more, is most my shame,—have you not dishonour'd me?

Mask. No, that I deny; for I never told in all my life: so that accusation's answer'd; on to the next.

La. Touch. Death! do you dally with my passion? Insolent devil! But have a care,—provoke me not; for, by the eternal fire, you shall not 'scape my vengeance.—Calm villain! How unconcern'd he stands, confessing treachery and ingratitude! Is there a vice more black!—O I have excuses, thousands, for my faults; fire in my temper, passions in my soul, apt to ev'ry provocation; oppress'd at once with love and with despair. But a sedate, a thinking villain, whose black blood runs temperately bad, what excuse can clear!

Mask. Will you be in temper, Madam? I would not talk not to be heard. I have been [*She walks about disorder'd.*] a very great rogue for your sake, and you reproach me with it; I am ready to be a rogue still, to do you service; and you are flinging conscience and honour in my face, to rebate my inclinations. How am I to behave myself? You know I am your creature, my life and fortune in your power; to disoblige you, brings me certain ruin. Allow it, I would betray you, I would not be a traitor to myself: I don't pretend to honesty, because you know I am a rascal; but I would convince you from the necessity of my being firm to you.

La. Touch. Necessity! impudence! Can no gratitude incline you, no obligations touch you? Have not my fortune and my person been subjected to your pleasure? Were you not in the nature of a servant, and have not I in effect made you lord of all, of me, and of my lord? Where is that humble love, that languishing, that adoration, which once was paid me, and everlastingly engaged?

Mask. Fixt, rooted in my heart, whence nothing can remove 'em: yet you——

La. Touch. Yet, what yet?

Mask. Nay, misconceive me not, Madam, when I say I have had a gen'rous and a faithful passion, which you had never favour'd, but thro' revenge and policy.

La. Touch. Ha!

Mask. Look you, Madam, we are alone,—pray contain yourself, and hear me. You know you lov'd your nephew, when I first sigh'd for you; I quickly found it; an argument that I lov'd; for with that art you veil'd your passion, 'twas imperceptible to all but jealous eyes. This discovery made me bold; I confess it; for by it, I thought you in my power. Your nephew's scorn of you, added to my hopes; I watch'd the occasion, and took you, just repuls'd by him, warm at once with love and indignation; your disposition, my arguments, and happy opportunity, accomplish'd my designs; I press'd the yielding minute, and was blest'd. How I have lov'd you since, words have not shewn, then how should words express?

La. Touch. Well, mollifying devil!—and have I not met your love with forward fire?

Mask. Your zeal I grant was ardent, but misplac'd; there was revenge in view; that woman's idol had defil'd the temple of the god, and love was made a mock-worship.—A son and heir would have edg'd young Mellefont upon the brink of ruin, and left him none but you to catch at for prevention.

La. Touch. Again provoke me! Do you wind me like a larum, only to rouse my own still'd soul for your diversion? Confusion!

Mask. Nay, Madam, I'm gone, if you relapse.—What needs this? I say nothing but what you yourself, in open hours of love, have told me. Why should you deny it? Nay, how can you? Is not all this present heat owing to the same fire? Do you not love him still? How have I this day offended you, but in not breaking off his match with Cynthia? which ere to-morrow shall be done,—had you but patience.

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ACT II. THE DOUBLE DEALER. 19

La. Touch. How, what said you, Maskwell?—another caprice to unwind my temper?

Mask. By Heav'n, no; I am your slave, the slave of all your pleasures; and, will not rest till I have given you peace, would you suffer me.

La. Touch. O Maskwell, in vain I do disguise me from thee, thou know'st me, know'st the very inmost windings and recesses of my soul.—Oh Mellefont! I burn; married to-morrow! Despair strikes me. Yet my soul knows I hate him too: let him but once be mine, and next immediate ruin seize him.

Mask. Compose yourself, you shall possess and ruin him too,—Will that please you?

La. Touch. How, how? Thou dear, thou precious villain, how?

Mask. You have already been tampering with my Lady Plyant.

La. Touch. I have: she is ready for any impression I think fit.

Mask. She must be thoroughly persuaded that Mellefont loves her.

La. Touch. She is so credulous that way naturally, and likes him so well, that she will believe it faster than I can persuade her. But I don't see what you can propose from such a trifling design; for her first conversing with Mellefont will convince her of the contrary.

Mask. I know it.—I don't depend upon it.—But it will prepare something else; and gain us leisure to lay a stronger plot: if I gain a little time, I shall not want contrivance.

One minute gives invention to destroy,
What to rebuild, will a whole age employ.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Lady FROTH and CYNTHIA.

CYNTHIA.

INDEED, Madam? Is it possible your Ladyship could have been so much in love?

La. Froth. I could not sleep; I did not sleep one wink for three weeks together.

Cyn. Prodigious! I wonder want of sleep, and so much love, and so much wit as your Ladyship has, did not turn your brain.

La. Froth. O my dear Cynthia, you must not rally your friend,—but really, as you say, I wonder too:—but then I had a way.—For between you and I, I had whimsies and vapours, but I gave them vent.

Cyn. How pray, Madam?

La. Froth. O I writ, writ abundantly.—Do you never write?

Cyn. Write, what?

La. Froth. Songs, elegies, satires, encomiums, panegyrics, lampoons, plays, or heroic poems.

Cyn. O Lord, not I, Madam; I'm content to be a courteous reader.

La. Froth. O inconsistent! in love, and not write! if my Lord and I had been both of your temper, we had never come together.—O bless me! what a sad thing wou'd that have been, if my Lord and I should never have met!

Cyn. Then neither my Lord nor you would ever have met with your match, on my conscience.

La. Froth. O' my conscience, no more we should! thou say'st right—For sure my Lord Froth is as fine a gentleman, and as much a man of quality! Ah! nothing at all of the common air.—I think I may say he wants nothing but a blue ribbon and a star, to make him shine the very phosphorus of our hemisphere. Do you understand those two hard words? If you don't, I'll explain 'em to you.

Cyn. Yes, yes, Madam, I'm not so ignorant—At least I won't own it, to be troubled with your instructions.

[*Aside.*]

La. Froth. Nay, I beg your pardon; but being deriv'd from the Greek, I thought you might have escap'd the etymology.—But I'm the more amaz'd to find you a woman of letters, and not write! Bless me! how can Mellefont believe you love him?

Cyn. Why, faith, Madam, he that won't take my word, shall never have it under my hand.

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ACT II. THE DOUBLE DEALER. 21

La. Froth. I vow Mellefont's a pretty gentleman, but methinks he wants a manner.

Cyn. A manner! What's that, Madam?

La. Froth. Some distinguishing quality; as for example, the *belle air* or *brilliant* of Mr Brisk; the solemnity, yet complaisance of my Lord, or something of his own that should look a little *je-ne-sçai-quoy*; he is too much a mediocrity in my mind.

Cyn. He does not indeed affect either pertness or formality; for which I like him: here he comes.

La. Froth. And my Lord with him: pray, observe the difference.

S C E N E II.

To them Lord FROTH, MELLEFONT, and BRISK.

Cyn. Impertinent creature! I could almost be angry with her now. [*Aside.*]

La. Froth. My Lord, I have been telling Cynthia how much I have been in love with you; I swear I have; I'm not ashamed to own it now: ah! it makes my heart leap! I vow, I sigh when I think on't: my dear Lord, ha, ha, ha! do you remember, my Lord?

[*Squeezes him by the hand, looks kindly on him, sighs, and then laughs out.*]

L. Froth. Pleasant creature! Perfectly well. Ah, that look!—ay, there it is—who could resist! 'Twas so my heart was made captive first, and ever since 't has been in love with happy slavery.

La. Froth. O that tongue, that dear deceitful tongue! that charming softness in your mien and your expression; and then your bow! Good my Lord, bow as you did when I gave you my picture; here, suppose this my picture—[*Gives him a pocket-glass.*] Pray, mind my Lord: ah, he bows charmingly! nay, my Lord, you shan't kiss it so much; I shall grow jealous, I vow now.

[*He bows profoundly low, then kisses the glass.*]

L. Froth. I saw myself there, and kiss'd it for your sake.

La. Froth. Ah! gallantry to the last degree—Mr Brisk, you're a judge; was ever any thing so well bred as my Lord?

Brisk. Never any thing but your Ladyship, let me perish.

La. Froth. O prettily turn'd again: let me die but you have a great deal of wit: Mr Mellefont, don't you think Mr Brisk has a world of wit?

Mel. O yes, Madam.

Brisk. O dear Madam——

La. Froth. An infinite deal.

Brisk. O Heav'ns, Madam——

La. Froth. More wit than any body.

Brisk. I'm everlastingly your humble servant, duce take me, Madam.

L. Froth. Don't you think us a happy couple?

Cyn. I vow, my Lord, I think you the happiest couple in the world; for you're not only happy in one another, and when you are together, but happy in yourselves, and by yourselves.

L. Froth. I hope Mellefont will make a good husband too.

Cyn. 'Tis my interest to believe he will, my Lord.

L. Froth. D'ye think he'll love you as well as I do my wife? I'm afraid not.

Cyn. I believe he'll love me better.

L. Froth. Heav'ns, that can never be! but why do you think so?

Cyn. Because he has not so much reason to be fond of himself.

L. Froth. O your humble servant for that, dear Madam: well, Mellefont, you'll be a happy creature.

Mel. Ay, my Lord, I shall have the same reason for my happiness that your Lordship has; I shall think myself happy.

L. Froth. Ah, that's all.

Brisk to La. Froth.] Your Ladyship's in the right; but, i'gad, I'm wholly turn'd into satire. I confess I write but seldom, but when I do——keen Iambicks, i'gad. But my Lord was telling me, your Ladyship has made an essay toward an heroic poem.

La. Froth. Did my Lord tell you? Yes, I vow; and the subject is my Lord's love to me. And what do you

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ACT II. The DOUBLE DEALER. 23

think I call it? I dare swear you won't guess—*The Sillabub*, ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Because my Lord's title's *Froth*, i'gad! ha, ha, ha! Duce take me, very a *propos*, and surprising! ha, ha, ha!

La. Froth. He! ay; is it not?—And then I call my Lord *Spumoso*; and myself—what d'ye think I call myself?

Brisk. *Lactilla* may be—'Gad, I cannot tell.

La. Froth. *Biddy*, that's all; just my own name.

Brisk. *Biddy*! I'gad, very pretty—Duce take me if your Ladyship has not the art of surprising the most naturally in the world.—I hope you will make me happy in communicating the poem.

La. Froth. O, you must be my confident, I must ask your advice.

Brisk. I'm your humble servant, let me perish—I presume your Ladyship has read *Boscu*?

La. Froth. O yes; and *Rapin*, and *Dacier* upon *Aristotle* and *Horace*.—My Lord, you must not be jealous; I'm communicating all to Mr *Brisk*.

L. Froth. No, no, I'll allow Mr *Brisk*: have you nothing about you to shew him, my dear?

La. Froth. Yes, I believe I have.—Mr *Brisk*, come, will you go into the next room? and there I'll shew you what I have.

L. Froth. I'll walk a turn in the garden, and come to you.

S C E N E III.

MELLEFONT, CYNTHIA.

Mel. You're thoughtful, Cynthia?

Cyn. I'm thinking, tho' marriage makes man and wife one flesh, it leaves them still two souls; and they become more conspicuous by setting off one another.

Mel. That's only when two fools meet, and their follies are oppos'd.

Cyn. Nay, I have known two wits meet, and by the opposition of their wit, render themselves as ridiculous as fools. 'Tis an odd game we're going to play at: what think you of drawing stakes, and giving over in time?

Mel. No, hang't! that's not endeavouring to win, because it's possible we may lose; since we have shuffled and cut, let's e'en turn up trump now.

Cyn. Then I find it's like cards, if either of us have a good hand it is an accident of Fortune.

Mel. No; marriage is rather like a game at bowls; Fortune indeed makes the match; and the two nearest, and sometimes the two farthest are together, but the game depends entirely upon judgment.

Cyn. Still it is a game, and consequently one of us must be a loser.

Mel. Not at all; only a friendly trial of skill, and the winnings to be laid out in an entertainment.—What's here? the music!—Oh, my Lord has promis'd the company a new song, we'll get 'em to give it us by the way. [*Musicians crossing the stage.*] Pray, let us have the favour of you, to practise the song before the company hear it.

S O N G.

Cynthia frowns whene'er I wooe her,

Yet she's vex'd if I give over;

Much she fears I should undo her,

But much more to lose her lover:

Thus in doubting, she refuses;

And not winning, thus she loses.

II.

Pr'ythee, Cynthia, look behind you,

Age and wrinkles will o'ertake you;

Then, too late, desire will find you,

When the power must forsake you:

Think, O think o' the sad condition,

To be past, yet wish fruition.

Mel. You shall have my thanks below.

[*To the Music. They go out.*]

S C E N E IV.

To them Sir PAUL PLYANT and Lady PLYANT.

Sir Paul. Gadsbud! I am provok'd into a fermentation, as my Lady Froth says; was ever the like read of in story?

La. Ply. Sir Paul, have patience; let me alone to rattle him up.

Sir Paul. Pray your Ladyship, give me leave to be angry—I'll rattle him up I warrant you, I'll firk him with a *certiorari*.

La. Ply. You firk him! I'll firk him myself: pray, Sir Paul, hold you contented.

Cyn. Bless me! what makes my father in such a passion?—I never saw him thus before.

Sir Paul. Hold yourself contented, my Lady Plyant;—I find passion coming upon me by inflation, and I cannot submit as formerly, therefore give way.

La. Ply. How now! will you be pleas'd to retire, and—

Sir Paul. No, marry, will I not be pleased! I am pleas'd to be angry, that's my pleasure at this time.

Mel. What can this mean?

La. Ply. Gad's my life! the man's distracted! why, how now, who are you? what am I? Slidikins, can't I govern you? What did I marry you for? Am I not to be absolute and uncontrollable? Is it fit a woman of my spirit and conduct should be contradicted in a matter of this concern?

Sir Paul. It concerns me, and only me;—besides, I'm not to be govern'd at all times. When I am in tranquillity, my Lady Plyant shall command Sir Paul; but when I am provok'd to fury, I cannot incorporate with patience and reason—as soon may tigers match with tigers, lambs with lambs, and every creature couple with its foe, as the poet says.—

La. Ply. He's hot-headed still! 'Tis in vain to talk to you; but remember I have a curtain-lecture for you, you disobedient, headstrong brute.

Sir Paul. No; 'tis because I won't be headstrong, because I won't be a brute, and have my head fortify'd, that I am thus exasperated.—But I will protect my honour, and yonder is the violater of my fame.

La. Ply. 'Tis my honour that is concern'd, and the violation was intended to me. Your honour! you have none but what is in my keeping, and I can dispose of it when I please.—therefore don't provoke me.

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Sir Paul. Hum, gadsbud, she says true!—Well, my Lady, march on; I will fight under you then; I am convinc'd, as far as passion will permit.

[*La. Ply. and Sir Paul come up to Mellefont.*]

La. Ply. Inhuman and treacherous.

Sir Paul. Thou serpent and first tempter of woman-kind!

Cyn. Bless me, Sir!—Madam, what mean you?

Sir Paul. Thy, Thy, come away, Thy, touch him not; come hither, girl, go not near him, there's nothing but deceit about him; snakes are in his peruke, and the crocodile of Nilus is in his belly, he will eat thee up alive.

La. Ply. Dishonourable, impudent creature!

Mel. For Heav'n's sake, Madam, to whom do you direct this language!

La. Ply. Have I behav'd myself with all the decorum and nicety befitting the person of Sir Paul's wife? have I preserv'd my honour, as it were, in a snow-house for these three years past? have I been white and unsully'd even by Sir Paul himself?

Sir Paul. Nay, she has been an invincible wife, even to me, that's the truth on't.

La. Ply. Have I, I say, preserv'd myself, like a fair sheet of paper, for you to make a blot upon?

Sir Paul. And she shall make a simile with any woman in England.

Mel. I am so amaz'd, I know not what to say!

Sir Paul. Do you think my daughter, this pretty creature—gadsbud, she's a wife for a cherubin!—do you think her fit for nothing but to be a stalking-horse to stand before you, while you take aim at my wife? Gadsbud, I was never angry before in my life, and I'll never be pleas'd again.

Mel. Hell and damnation! This is my aunt; such malice can be engender'd nowhere else. [*Aside.*]

La. Ply. Sir Paul, take Cynthia from his sight; leave me to strike him with the remorse of his intended crime.

Cyn. Pray, Sir, stay, hear him, I dare affirm he's innocent.

Sir Paul. Innocent! Why, hark'ee, come hither, Thy,

hark'ee, I had it from his aunt, my sister Touchwood—
 Gadsood, he does not care a farthing for any thing of
 thee, but thy portion; why, he's in love with his wife;
 he would have tantaliz'd thee, and made a cuckold of
 thy poor father—and that would certainly have broke
 my heart.—I'm sure if ever I should have horns they
 would kill me; they would never come kindly, I should
 die of 'em, like a child that was cutting his teeth.—
 I should indeed, Thy—therefore, come away; but Pro-
 vidence has prevented all, therefore come away, when
 I bid you.

Cyn. I must obey.

S C E N E V.

Lady PLYANT, MELLEFONT.

La. Ply. Such a thing! the impiety of it startles me—
 to wrong so good, so fair a creature, and one that loves
 you tenderly—'tis a barbarity of barbarities, and no-
 thing could be guilty of it—

Mel. But the greatest villain imagination can form, I
 grant it; and next to the villainy of such a fact, is the
 villainy of aspersing me with the guilt. How! which
 way was I to wrong her? For yet I understand you not.

La. Ply. Why, gads my life, cousin Mellefont, you
 cannot be so peremptory as to deny it, when I tax you
 with it to your face? for now Sir Paul's gone, you are
corum nobis.

Mel. By Heav'n, I love her more than life, or—

La. Ply. Fiddle faddle, don't tell me of this and that,
 and ev'ry thing in the world, but give me mathematicular
 demonstration, answer me directly—but I have not
 patience.—Oh, the impiety of it, as I was saying, and
 the unparallell'd wickedness! O merciful Father! how
 could you think to reverse Nature so, to make the
 daughter the means of procuring the mother?

Mel. The daughter to procure the mother!

La. Ply. Ay, for though I am not Cynthia's own mo-
 ther, I am her father's wife; and that's near enough
 to make it incest.

Mel. Incest! O my precious aunt, and the devil in
 conjunction!

[*Aside.*

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La. Ply. O reflect upon the horror of that, and then the guilt of deceiving every body; marrying the daughter only to make a cuckold of the father; and then seducing me, debauching my purity, and perverting me from the road of virtue, in which I have trod thus long, and never made one slip, not one *faux pas*; O consider it! what would you have to answer for, if you should provoke me to frailty? Alas, humanity is feeble, Heaven knows! very feeble, and unable to support itself. *Mel.* Where am I? is it day? and am I awake? Madam——

La. Ply. And nobody knows how circumstances may happen together;——to my thinking, now, I could resist the strongest temptation,——but yet I know, 'tis impossible for me to know whether I could or not; there's no certainty in the things of this life.

Mel. Madam, pray give me leave to ask you one question.——

La. Ply. O Lord, ask me the question! I'll swear I'll refuse it; I swear I'll deny it; therefore don't ask me, nay, you shan't ask me, I swear I'll deny it. O Gemini, you have brought all the blood into my face; I warrant I am as red as a Turkey cock; O fy, Cousin Mellefont!

Mel. Nay, Madam, hear me; I mean——

La. Ply. Hear you! no, no; I'll deny you first, and hear you afterwards. For one does not know how one's mind may change upon hearing.——Hearing is one of the senses, and all the senses are fallible; I won't trust my honour, I assure you; my honour is infallible and uncomarable.

Mel. For Heaven's sake, Madam——

La. Ply. O name it no more——bless me, how can you talk of Heaven, and have so much wickedness in your heart? may be you don't think it a sin,——they say some of you gentlemen don't think it a sin,——may be it is no sin to them that don't think it so; indeed, if I did not think it a sin——But still my honour, if it were no sin——But then, to marry my daughter, for the conveniency of frequent opportunities——I'll never consent to that; as sure as can be, I'll break the match.

ACT II. The DOUBLE DEALER. 29

Mel. Death and amazement!—Madam, upon my knees—

La. Ply. Nay, nay, rise up; come, you shall see my good nature. I know love is powerful, and nobody can help his passion; 'tis not your fault; nor I swear it is not mine:—how can I help it if I have charms? and how can you help it if you are made a captive? I swear it is pity it should be a fault,—but my honour,—well, but your honour too,—but the sin,—well, but the necessity.—O Lord, here's somebody coming, I dare not stay. Well, you must consider of your crime; and strive as much as can be against it;—strive, be sure—but don't be melancholic, don't despair,—but never think that I'll grant you any thing; O Lord, no;—but be sure you lay aside all thoughts of the marriage: for tho' I know you don't love Cynthia, only as a blind for your passion to me; yet it will make me jealous.—O Lord, what did I say? jealous! no, no, I can't be jealous, for I must not love you,—therefore don't hope—but don't despair neither.—O they're coming, I must fly.

SCENE VI.

MELLEFONT alone.

Mel. *after a pause.*] So then,—spite of my care and foresight, I am caught, caught in my security.—Yet this was but a shallow artifice, unworthy of my machiavillian aunt: there must be more behind, this is but the first flash, the priming of her engine; destruction follows hard, if not most presently prevented.

SCENE VII.

To him, MASKWELL.

Mel. Maskwell, welcome; thy presence is a view of land, appearing to my shipwreck'd hopes: the witch has rais'd the storm, and her ministers have done their work; you see the vessels are parted.

Mask. I know it; I met Sir Paul towing away Cynthia: come, trouble not your head, I'll join you together ere to-morrow morning, or drown between you in the attempt.

Mel. There's comfort in a hand stretch'd out, to one that's sinking, though ne'er so far off.

Mask. No sinking, nor no danger; come, cheer up. Why, you don't know, that while I plead for you, your aunt has given me a retaining fee; nay, I am your greatest enemy, and she does but journey-work under me.

Mel. Ha! how's this?

Mask. What d'ye think of my being employ'd in the execution of all her plots? Ha, ha, ha! by Heav'n it's true; I have undertaken to break the match, I have undertaken to make your uncle disinheret you, to get you turn'd out of doors; and to—Ha, ha, ha! I can't tell you for laughing,—Oh, she has open'd her heart to me,—I am to turn you a-grazing, and to—Ha, ha, ha! marry Cynthia myself; there's a plot for you.

Mel. Ha! O I see, I see my rising sun! light breaks thro' clouds upon me, and shall I live in day?—O my Maskwell! how shall I thank or praise thee? thou hast outwitted woman—but tell me, how could'st thou thus get into her confidence?—Ha! how? but was it her contrivance to persuade my Lady Plyant to this extravagant belief?

Mask. It was, and to tell you the truth I encourag'd it for your diversion: tho' it made you a little uneasy for the present, yet the reflection of it must needs be entertaining—I warrant she was very violent at first.

Mel. Ha, ha, ha! ay, a very fury; but I was most afraid of her violence at last;—if you had not come as you did, I don't know what she might have attempted.

Mask. Ha, ha, ha! I know her temper.—Well, you must know then, that all my contrivances were but bubbles, 'till at last I pretended to have been long secretly in love with Cynthia; that did my business: that convinced your aunt I might be trusted, since it was as much my interest as hers to break the match: then she thought my jealousy might qualify me to assist her in her revenge. And, in short, in that belief, told me the secrets of her heart. At length we made this agreement, if I accomplish her designs (as I told you before) she has engag'd to put Cynthia with all her fortune into my power.

Mel. She is most gracious in her favour!—Well, and dear Jack, how hast thou contrived?

Mask. I would not have you stay to hear it now; for

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I don't know but she may come this way; I am to meet her anon; after that, I'll tell you the whole matter; be here in the gallery an hour hence, by that time I imagine our consultation may be over.

Mel. I will; 'till then success attend thee.

S C E N E VIII.

MASKWELL alone.

Mask. 'Till then success will attend me; for when I meet you, I meet the only obstacle to my fortune. Cynthia, let thy beauty gild my crimes; and whatsoever I commit of treachery or deceit, shall be imputed to me as a merit.—Treachery! what treachery? love cancels all the bonds of friendship, and sets men right upon their first foundations. Duty to kings, piety to parents, gratitude to benefactors, and fidelity to friends, are different and particular ties: but the name rival cuts 'em all afunder, and is a general acquittance.—Rival is equal, and love like death an universal leveller of mankind. Ha! but is there not such a thing as honesty? yes, and whosoever has it about him, bears an enemy in his breast; for your honest man, as I take it, is that nice, scrupulous, conscientious person, who will cheat nobody but himself; such another coxcomb as your wise man, who is too hard for all the world, and will be made a fool of by nobody but himself: ha, ha, ha! Well, for wisdom and honesty give me cunning and hypocrisy; oh, 'tis such a pleasure, to angle for fair-fac'd fools! then that hungry gudgeon credulity will bite at any thing—why, let me see, I have the same face, the same words and accents, when I speak what I do think, and when I speak what I do not think—the very same; and dear dissimulation is the only art not to be known from nature.

Why will mankind be fools, and be deceived?

And why are friends and lovers oaths believed?

When each, who searches strictly his own mind,

May to much fraud and power of baseness find.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Lord TOUCHWOOD and Lady TOUCHWOOD.

MY Lord, can you blame my brother Plyant if he refuse his daughter upon this provocation? The contract's void by this unheard-of impiety.

L. Touch. I don't believe it true; he has better principles—Pho, 'tis nonsense. Come, come, I know my Lady Plyant has a large eye, and would centre every thing in her own circle: 'tis not the first time she has mistaken respect for love, and made Sir Paul jealous of the civility of an undesigning person, the better to bespeak his security in her unfeigned pleasures.

La. Touch. You censure hardly, my Lord: my sister's honour is very well known.

L. Touch. Yes, I believe I know some that have been familiarly acquainted with it. This is a little trick wrought by some pitiful contriver, envious of my nephew's merit.

La. Touch. Nay, my Lord, it may be so, and I hope it will be found so: but that will require some time; for in such a case as this demonstration is necessary.

L. Touch. There should have been demonstration of the contrary too, before it had been believed.—

La. Touch. So I suppose there was.

L. Touch. How? Where? When?

La. Touch. That I can't tell; nay, I don't say there was—I am willing to believe as favourably of my nephew as I can.

L. Touch. I don't know that. [Half aside.]

La. Touch. How? Don't you believe that, say you, my Lord?

L. Touch. No, I don't say so—I confess I am troubled to find you so cold in his defence.

La. Touch. His defence! Bless me, wou'd you have me defend an ill thing?

L. Touch. You believe it then?

La. Touch. I don't know; I am very unwilling to speak my thoughts in any thing that may be to my cousin's

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disadvantage ; besides, I find, my Lord, you are prepared to receive an ill impression from any opinion of mine which is not consenting with your own : but since I am like to be suspected in the end, and 'tis a pain any longer to dissemble, I own it to you : in short, I do believe it, nay, and can believe any thing worse, if it were laid to his charge. — Don't ask me my reasons, my Lord, for they are not fit to be told you.

L. Touch. I'm amaz'd ; here must be something more than ordinary in this. [*Aside.*] Not fit to be told me, Madam ? You can have no interest wherein I am not concern'd, and consequently the same reasons ought to be convincing to me which create your satisfaction or disquiet.

La. Touch. But those which cause my disquiet I am willing to have remote from your hearing. Good my Lord, don't press me.

L. Touch. Don't oblige me to press you.

La. Touch. Whate'er it was, 'tis past ; and that is better to be unknown which cannot be prevented ; therefore let me beg you to rest satisfied —

L. Touch. When you have told me, I will —

La. Touch. You won't.

L. Touch. By my life, my dear, I will.

La. Touch. What if you can't ?

L. Touch. How ? Then I must know, nay, I will : no more trifling — I charge you tell me — By all our mutual peace to come ; upon your duty —

La. Touch. Nay, my Lord, you need say no more to make me lay my heart before you ; but don't be thus transported ; compose yourself : it is not of concern to make you lose one minute's temper. 'Tis not indeed, my dear. Nay, by this kiss you shan't be angry. O Lord, I wish I had not told you any thing. — Indeed, my Lord, you have frighted me. Nay, look pleas'd, I'll tell you.

L. Touch. Well, well.

La. Touch. Nay, but will you be calm ? — Indeed it's nothing but —

L. Touch. But what ?

La. Touch. But will you promise me not to be angry ? — Nay, you must — not be angry with Mellefont. — I dare swear he is sorry, and were it to do again, would not —

L. Touch. Sorry, for what? 'Death! you rack me with delay.

La. Touch. Nay, no great matter, only—Well, I have your promise—Pho, why nothing, only your nephew had a mind to amuse himself sometimes with a little gallantry towards me. Nay, I can't think he meant any thing seriously, but methought it look'd oddly.

L. Touch. Confusion and hell, what do I hear!

La. Touch. Or, may be, he thought he was not enough a-kin to me upon your account, and had a mind to create a nearer relation on his own; a lover, you know, my Lord—Ha, ha, ha! Well,—but that's all—Now, you have it. Well, remember your promise, my Lord, and don't take any notice of it to him.

L. Touch. No, no, no—Damnation!

La. Touch. Nay, I swear you must not—A little harmless mirth—Only misplaced, that's all.—But if it were more, 'tis over now, and all's well. For my part, I have forgot it, and so has he, I hope—for I have not heard any thing from him these two days.

L. Touch. These two days! Is it so fresh? Unnatural villain! Death! I'll have him stripp'd and turn'd naked out of my doors this moment, and let him rot and perish; incestuous brute!

La. Touch. O, for Heaven's sake, my Lord, you'll ruin me if you take such public notice of it; it will be a town-talk. Consider your own and my honour—Nay, I told you you would not be satisfied when you knew it.

L. Touch. Before I've done I will be satisfy'd. Ungrateful monster! how long?—

La. Touch. Lord, I don't know; I wish my lips had grown together when I told you—Almost a twelvemonth.—Nay, I won't tell you any more 'till you are yourself. Pray, my Lord, don't let the company see you in this disorder—Yet, I confess, I can't blame you; for I think I was never so surpris'd in my life.—Who would have thought my nephew could have so misconstrued my kindness—But will you go into your closet and recover your temper? I'll make an excuse of sudden business to the company, and come to you. Pray, good dear my

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Lord, let me beg you do now; I'll come immediately and tell you all: will you, my Lord?

L. Touch. I will—I am mute with wonder.

La. Touch. Well, but go now, here's some body coming.

E. Touch. Well, I go—You won't stay; for I would hear more of this.

La. Touch. I follow instantly——So——

S C E N E II.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, MASKWELL.

Mask. This was a masterpiece, and did not need my help—though I stood ready for a cue to come in and confirm all, had there been occasion.

La. Touch. Have you seen Mellefont?

Mask. I have; and am to meet him here about this time.

La. Touch. How does he bear his disappointment?

Mask. Secure in my assistance, he seem'd not much afflicted, but rather laugh'd at the shallow artifice, which so little time must of necessity discover. Yet he is apprehensive of some farther design of yours, and has engaged me to watch you. I believe he will hardly be able to prevent your plot, yet I would have you use caution and expedition.

La. Touch. Expedition indeed; for all we do must be perform'd in the remaining part of this ev'ning, and before the company break up; lest my Lord should come, and have an opportunity to talk with him privately—My Lord must not see him again.

Mask. By no means; therefore you must aggravate my Lord's displeasure to a degree that will admit of no conference with him.—What think you of mentioning me?

La. Touch. How!

Mask. To my Lord, as having been privy to Mellefont's design upon you, but still using my utmost endeavours to dissuade him: tho' my friendship and love to him has made me conceal it; yet you may say, I threaten'd next time he attempted any thing of that kind to discover it to my Lord.

La. Touch. To what end is this?

Mask. It will confirm my Lord's opinion of my honour and honesty, and create in him a new confidence

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in me, which (should this design miscarry) will be necessary to the forming another plot that I have in my head—To cheat you, as well as the rest. [*Aside.*]

La. Touch. I'll do it—I'll tell him you hindered him once from forcing me.

Mask. Excellent! Your Ladyship has a most improving fancy. You had best go to my Lord, keep him as long as you can in his closet, and I doubt not but you will mould him to what you please; your guests are so engaged in their own follies and intrigues, they'll miss neither of you.

La. Touch. When shall we meet?—At eight this evening in my chamber; there rejoice at our success, and toy away an hour in mirth.

Mask. I will not fail.

S C E N E III.

MASKWELL alone.

Mask. I know what she means by toying away an hour well enough. Pox! I have lost all appetite to her: yet she's a fine woman, and I lov'd her once. But I don't know, since I have been in a great measure kept by her, the case is alter'd; what was my pleasure is become my duty: and I have as little stomach to her now as if I were her husband. Should she smother my design upon Cynthia, I were in a fine pickle. She has a damn'd penetrating head, and knows how to interpret a coldness the right way; therefore I must dissemble ardor and ecstasy, that's resolv'd: how easily and pleasantly is that dissembled before fruition! Pox on't, that a man can't drink without quenching his thirst. Ha! yonder comes Mellefont thoughtful. Let me think: meet her at eight—hum—ha! By Heav'n I have it—If I can speak to my Lord before—Was it my brain or providence? No matter which—I will deceive 'em all, and yet secure myself: 'twas a lucky thought! Well, this double dealing is a jewel. Here he comes, now for me.—

[*Maskwell pretending not to see him, walks by him, and speaks as it were to himself.*]

S C E N E IV.

To him MELLEFONT musing.

Mask. Mercy on us! what will the wickedness of this world come to?

Mel. How now, Jack? What, so full of contemplation that you run over!

Mask. I'm glad you're come, for I could not contain myself any longer: and was just going to give vent to a secret, which no body but you ought to drink down.—Your aunt's just gone from hence.

Mel. And having trusted thee with the secrets of her soul, thou art villainously bent to discover 'em all to me, ha?

Mask. I'm afraid my frailty leans that way—But I don't know whether I can in honour discover 'em all.

Mel. All, all, man. What, you may in honour betray her as far as she betrays herself. No tragical design upon my person, I hope?

Mask. No, but it's a comical design upon mine.

Mel. What dost thou mean?

Mask. Listen and be dumb, we have been bargaining about the rate of your ruin——

Mel. Like any two guardians to an orphan heiress—Well.

Mask. And whereas pleasure is generally paid with mischief, what mischief I do is to be paid with pleasure.

Mel. So when you've swallow'd the potion, you sweeten your mouth with a plumb.

Mask. You are merry, Sir, but I shall probe your constitution. In short, the price of your banishment is to be paid with the person of——

Mel. Of Cynthia, and her fortune—Why, you forget you told me this before.

Mask. No, no—so far you are right; and I am, as an earnest of that bargain, to have full and free possession of the person of—your aunt.

Mel. Ha!—Pho, you trifle.

Mask. By this light, I'm serious; all raillery apart—I knew 'twould stun you: this evening at eight she will receive me in her bedchamber.

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Mel. Hell and the devil! is she abandon'd of all grace?
—Why the woman is possess'd—

Mask. Well, will you go in my stead?

Mel. By Heav'n into a hot furnace sooner.

Mask. No, you would not.—It would not be so convenient, as I can order matters.

Mel. What d'ye mean?

Mask. Mean? Not to disappoint the lady, I assure you.—Ha, ha, ha! how gravely he looks!—Come, come, I won't perplex you. 'Tis the only thing that Providence could have contriv'd to make me capable of serving you, either to my inclination or your own necessity.

Mel. How, how, for Heav'n's sake, dear Maskwell?

Mask. Why, thus—I'll go according to appointment; you shall have notice at the critical minute to come and surprise your aunt and me together; counterfeit a rage against me, and I'll make my escape thro' the private passage from her chamber, which I'll take care to leave open: 'twill be hard if then you can't bring her to any conditions. For this discovery will disarm her of all defence, and leave her entirely at your mercy: nay, she must ever after be in awe of you.

Mel. Let me adore thee, my better Genius! By Heav'n I think it is not in the power of fate to disappoint my hopes—My hopes? my certainty!

Mask. Well, I'll meet you here, within a quarter of eight, and give you notice.

Mel. Good fortune ever go along with thee.

S C E N E V.

MELLEFONT, CARELESS.

Care. Mellefont, get out o' th' way, my Lady Plyant's coming, and I shall never succeed while thou art in sight.—Tho' she begins to tack about; but I made love a great while to no purpose.

Mel. Why, what's the matter? She's convinc'd that I don't care for her.

Care. I can't get an answer from her, that does not begin with her honour, or her virtue, her religion, or some such cant. Then she has told me the whole history of Sir Paul's nine years courtship; how he has lain

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for whole nights together upon the stairs, before her chamber-door; and that the first favour he received from her, was a piece of an old scarlet petticoat for a stomacher; which since the day of his marriage he has, out of a piece of gallantry, converted into a night cap; and wears it still with much solemnity on his anniversary wedding-night.

Mel. That I have seen, with the ceremony thereunto belonging—For on that night he creeps in at the bed's feet, like a gull'd Bassa that has married a relation of the Grand Signior, and that night he has his arms at liberty. Did not she tell you at what a distance she keeps him? He has confes'd to me that but at some certain times, that is, I suppose, when she apprehends being with child, he never has the privilege of using the familiarity of a husband with a wife. He was once given to scrambling with his hands, and sprawling in his sleep; and ever since she has him swaddled up in blankets, and his hands and feet swath'd down, and so put to bed; and there he lyes with a great beard, like a Russian bear upon a drift of snow. You are very great with him; I wonder he never told you his grievances; he will I warrant you.

Care. Excessively foolish!—But that which gives me most hopes of her, is her telling me of the many temptations she has resisted.

Mel. Nay, then you have her; for a woman's bragging to a man that she has overcome temptations, is an argument that they were weakly offer'd, and a challenge to him to engage her more irresistibly. 'Tis only an enhancing the price of the commodity, by telling you how many customers have underbid her.

Care. Nay, I don't despair—But still he has a grudging to you—I talk'd to her t'other night at my Lord Froth's masquerade, when I'm satisfy'd she knew me, and I had no reason to complain of my reception; but I find women are not the same bare-fac'd and in masks,—and a vizor disguises their inclinations as much as their faces.

Mel. 'Tis a mistake, for women may most properly be said to be unmask'd when they wear vizors; for that secures them from blushing, and being out of countenance, and next to being in the dark, or alone, they

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are most truly themselves in a rizzor mask. Here they come, I'll leave you—Ply her close, and by and by clap a *billot-doux* into her hand: for a woman never thinks a man truly in love with her, till he has been fool enough to think of her out of her sight, and to lose so much time as to write to her.

SCENE VI.

CARELESS, Sir PAUL and Lady PLYANT.

Sir Paul. Shan't we disturb your meditation, Mr Careless? you wou'd be private?

Care. You bring that along with you, Sir Paul, that shall be always welcome to my privacy.

Sir Paul. O, sweet Sir, you load your humble servants, both me and my wife, with continual favours.

La. Ply. Sir Paul, what a phrase was there? You will be making answers, and taking that upon you, which ought to ly upon me: that you should have so little breeding to think Mr Careless did not apply himself to me. Pray what have you to entertain any body's privacy? I swear and declare in the face of the world I'm ready to blush for your ignorance.

Sir Paul. I acquiesce, my Lady; but don't snub so loud. [Aside to her.

La. Ply. Mr Careless, if a person that is wholly illiterate might be supposed to be capable of being qualify'd to make a suitable return to those obligations which you are pleas'd to confer upon one that is wholly incapable of being qualify'd in all those circumstances, I'm sure I shou'd rather attempt it than any thing in the world, [Courtesies.] for I'm sure there's nothing in the world that I would rather. [Courtesies.] But I know Mr Careless is so great a critic and so fine a gentleman, that it is impossible for me.

Care. O heavens! Madam, you confound me.

Sir Paul. Gadsbud, she's a fine person—

La. Ply. O Lord! Sir, pardon me, we women have not those advantages: I know my own imperfections—But at the same time you must give me leave to declare in the face of the world that no body is more sensible of favours and things; for with the reserve of my ho-

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nour, I assure you, Mr Careless, I don't know any thing in the world I would refuse to a person so meritorious—You'll pardon my want of expression.

Care. O your Ladyship is abounding in all excellence, particularly that of phrase.

La. Ply. You are so obliging, Sir.

Care. Your Ladyship is so charming.

Sir Paul. So, now, now; now, my Lady.

La. Ply. So well-bred.

Care. So surprising.

La. Ply. So well dress'd, so *bonne min*, so eloquent, so unaffected, so easy, so free, so particular, so agreeable—

Sir Paul. Ay, so, so, there.

Care. O Lord, I beseech you, Madam, don't—

La. Ply. So gay, so graceful, so good teeth, so fine shape, so fine limbs, so fine linen, and I don't doubt but you have a very good skin, Sir.

Care. For Heav'n's sake, Madam—I'm quite out of countenance.

Sir Paul. And my Lady's quite out of breath; or else you should hear—gadsbud, you may talk of my Lady Froth—

Care. O fy, fy, not to be nam'd of a day—My Lady Froth is very well in her accomplishments—But it is when my Lady Plyant is not thought of—if that can ever be.

La. Ply. O you overcome me—That is so excessive.

Sir Paul. Nay, I swear and vow that was pretty.

Care. O Sir Paul, you are the happiest man alive. Such a Lady! that is the envy of her own sex, and the admiration of ours.

Sir Paul. Your humble servant: I am, I thank Heav'n, in a fine way of living, as I may say, peacefully and happily, and I think need not envy any of my neighbours, blessed be Providence—Ay, truly, Mr Careless, my Lady is a great blessing, a fine, discreet, well-spoken woman as you shall see—If it becomes me to say so; and we live very comfortably together; she is a little hasty sometimes, and so am I; but mine's soon over, and then I'm so sorry—O, Mr Careless, if it were not for one thing—

La. Ply. O, what is it?—
Dag

S C E N E VII.

CARELESS, Sir PAUL, Lady PLYANT, BOY with a letter.

Lady Ply. How often have you been told of that, you Jackanapes?

Sir Paul. Gad so, gad's bad—Tim, carry it to my Lady, you should have carry'd it to my Lady first.

Boy. 'Tis directed to your Worship.

Sir Paul. Well, well, but my Lady reads all letters first—Child, do so no more; d'ye hear, Tim.

Boy. No, and please you.

S C E N E VIII.

CARELESS, Sir PAUL, Lady PLYANT.

Sir Paul. A humour of my wife's, you know women have little fancies—But as I was telling you, Mr Careless, if it were not for one thing, I should think myself the happiest man in the world; indeed that touches me near, very near.

Care. What can that be, Sir Paul?

Sir Paul. Why, I have, I thank Heav'n, a very plentiful fortune, a good estate in the country, some houses in town and some money, a pretty tolerable personal estate; and it is a great grief to me, indeed it is, Mr Careless, that I have not a son to inherit this—'Tis true, I have a daughter, and a fine dutiful child she is, though I say it, blessed be Providence I may say; for indeed, Mr Careless, I am mightily beholden to Providence—A poor unworthy sinner—But if I had a son, ah! that's my affliction, and my only affliction; indeed I cannot refrain tears when it comes in my mind. [Cries.

Care. Why, methinks that might be easily remedied—my Lady's a fine likely woman—

Sir Paul. Oh, a fine likely woman as you shall see in a summer's day—indeed she is, Mr Careless, in all respects.

Care. And I should not have taken you to have been so old—

Sir Paul. Alas, that's not it, Mr Careless; ah! that's not it; no, no, you shoot wide of the mark a mile; indeed you do, that's not it, Mr Careless; no, no, that's not it.

Care. No! what can be the matter then?

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Sir Paul. You'll scarcely believe me, when I shall tell you—my lady is so nice—It's very strange, but it's true; too true—she's so very nice, that I don't believe she would touch a man for the world—at least not above once a year; I'm sure I have found it so: and alas! what's once a-year to an old man, who would do good in his generation? indeed it's true, Mr Careless, it breaks my heart—I am her husband, as I may say; though far unworthy of that honour, yet I am her husband; but alas-a-day, I have no more familiarity with her person—as to that matter—than with my own mother—no indeed.

Care. Alas-a-day, this is a lamentable story, my Lady must be told on't; she must I faith, Sir Paul, 'tis an injury to the world.

Sir Paul. Ah! would to Heav'n you would, Mr Careless; you are mightily in her favour.

Care. I warrant you: what, we must have a son some way or other.

Sir Paul. Indeed, I should be mightily bound to you if you could bring it about, Mr Careless.

La. Ply. Here, Sir Paul, it's from your steward, here's a return of six hundred pounds; you may take fifty of it for the next half year. *[Gives him a letter.]*

S C E N E IX.

To them Lord FROTH, CYNTHIA.

Sir Paul. How does my girl? come hither to thy father, poor Lamb, thou'rt melancholick.

L. Froth. Heav'n, Sir Paul, you amaze me, of all things in the world—you are never pleas'd but when we are all upon the broad grin; all laugh and no company; ah! then 'tis such a sight to see some teeth—sure you're a great admirer of my Lady Whifler, Mr Sneer, and Sir Lawrence Loud, and that gang.

Sir Paul. I vow and swear she's a very merry woman, but I think she laughs a little too much.

L. Froth. Merry! O Lord, what a character that is of a woman of quality—You have been at my Lady Whifler's upon her day, Madam?

Cyn. Yes, my Lord—I must humour this fool. *[Aside.]*

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L. Froth. Well and how? Hee! what is your sense of the conversation?

Cyn. O most ridiculous, a perpetual consort of laughing without any harmony; for sure, my Lord, to laugh out of time, is as disagreeable as to sing out of time or out of tune.

L. Froth. Hee, hee, hee! right; and then, my Lady Whifler is so ready—she always comes in three bars too soon—and then, what do they laugh at? for you know laughing without a jest is as impertinent; hee! as, as—

Cyn. As dancing without a fiddle.

L. Froth. Just i'faith, that was at my tongue's end.

Cyn. But that cannot be properly said of them, for I think they are all in good nature with the world, and only laugh at one another; and you must allow they have all jests in their persons, though they have none in their conversation.

L. Froth. True, as I'm a person of honour—For Heaven's sake let us sacrifice 'em to mirth a little.

[Enter Boy and whispers Sir Paul.

Sir Paul. Gads so—Wife, Wife, my Lady Plyant, I have a word.

La. Ply. I'm busy, Sir Paul, I wonder at your impertinence——

Care. Sir Paul, harkee, I'm reasoning the matter you know; Madam,—if your Ladyship please, we'll discourse of this in the next room.

Sir Paul. O ho, I wish you good success, I wish you good success. Boy, tell my Lady, when she has done, I would speak with her below.

S C E N E X.

CYNTHIA, Lord FROTH, Lady FROTH, BRISK.

La. Froth. Then you think that episode between Susan, the dairy-maid, and our coachman is not amiss; you know, I may suppose a dairy in town, as well as in the country.

Brisk. Incomparable, let me perish—but then, being an heroic poem, had you not better call him *charioteer*? *charioteer* sounds great; besides, your Ladyship's coachman having a red face, and you comparing him to the

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sun—And you know the sun is call'd Heaven's charioteer.

La. Froth. Oh, infinitely better; I am extremely beholden to you for the hint; stay, we'll read over those half a score lines again. [*Pulls out a paper.*] Let me see here, you know what goes before—the comparison, you know.

[*Reads.*] *For as the sun shines ev'ry day,
So of our coachman I may say.*

Brisk. I'm afraid that simile won't do in wet weather—Because you say the sun shines ev'ry day.

La. Froth. No, for the sun it won't, but it will do for the coachman, for you know there's most occasion for a coach in wet weather.

Brisk. Right, right, that saves all.

La. Froth. Then I don't say the sun shines all the day, but that he peeps now and then, yet he does shine all the day too, you know, though you don't see him.

Brisk. Right, but the vulgar will never comprehend that.

La. Froth. Well, you shall hear—let me see.

[*Reads.*] *For as the sun shines ev'ry day,
So of our coachman I may say,
He shows his drunken fiery face,
Just as the sun does more or less.*

Brisk. That's right, all's well, all's well. *More or less.*

*La. Froth reads.] And when at night his labour's done,
Then too, like Heaven's charioteer the sun:*

Ay, charioteer does better.

*Into the daisy he descends,
And there his whipping and his driving ends;
There he's secure from danger of a bilk,
His fare is paid him, and he sets in milk.*

For Susan, you know, is Thetis, and so—

Brisk. Incomparable well and proper, i'gad—But I have one exception to make—Don't you think *bilk* (I know it's good rhyme) but don't you think *bilk* and *fare* too like a hackney coachman?

La. Froth. I swear and vow I'm afraid so—And yet our Jehu was a hackney coachman, when my Lord took him.

Brisk. Was he? I'm answer'd, if Jehu was a hackney coachman—You may put that in the marginal notes though, to prevent criticism—Only mark it with a small asterisk, and say,—Jehu was formerly a hackney coachman.

La. Froth. I will; you'd oblige me extremely to write notes to the whole poem.

Brisk. With all my heart and soul, and proud of the vast honour, let me perish.

L. Froth. Hee, hee, hee, my dear, have you done?—won't you join with us? we were laughing at my Lady Whiffler and Mr Sneer.

La. Froth.—Ay, my dear—Were you? Oh filthy Mr Sneer; he's a nauseous figure, a most fulsome fop, foh—He spent two days together in going about Covent-Garden to suit the lining of his coach with his complection.

L. Froth. O silly! yet his aunt is as fond of him, as if she had brought the ape into the world herself.

Brisk. Who, my Lady Toorthless? O, she's a mortifying spectacle; she's always chewing the cud like an old ewe.

Cyn. Fy, Mr Brisk, eringos for her cough.

La. Froth. I have seen her take 'em half chew'd out of her mouth, to laugh, and then put 'em in again—Foh.

L. Froth. Foh.

La. Froth. Then she's always ready to laugh when Sneer offers to speak—And sits in expectation of his no jest, with her gums bare, and her mouth open—

Brisk. Like an oyster at low ebb, 'gad—Ha, ha, ha.

Cyn. aside.] Well, I find there are no fools so inconsiderable in themselves, but they can render other people contemptible by exposing their infirmities.

La. Froth. Then that t'other great strapping lady—I can't hit of her name; the old fat fool that paints so exorbitantly.

Brisk. I know whom you mean—But deuce take me I can't hit of her name neither—Paints d'ye say? Why she lays it on with a trowel—Then she has a great

ACT III. THE DOUBLE DEALER. 49

heard that bristles thro' it, and makes her look as if she were plaister'd with lime and hair, let me perish.

La. Froth. Oh, you made a song upon her, Mr Brisk.

Brisk. He! egad so I did—My Lord can sing it.

Cyn. O good my Lord let's hear it.

Brisk. 'Tis not a song neither—It's a sort of an epigram, or rather an epigrammatic sonnet; I don't know what to call it, but it's satire.—Sing it, my Lord.

Lord Froth sings.

Ancient Phillis has young graces,

'Tis a strange thing, but a true one;

Shall I tell you how?

She herself makes her own faces,

And each morning makes a new one;

Where's the wonder now?

Brisk. Short, but there's salt in't; my way of writing
egad,

SCENE XI.

To them FOOTMAN.

La. Froth. How now?

Foot. Your Ladyship's chair is come.

La. Froth. Is nurse and the child in it?

Foot. Yes, Madam.

La. Froth. O the dear creature! Let's go see it.

L. Froth. I swear, my dear, you'll spoil that child with sending it to and again so often; this is the seventh time the chair has gone for her to-day.

La. Froth. O-law, I swear it's but the sixth—and I han't seen her these two hours—The poor dear creature—I swear, my Lord, you don't love poor little Sapho—Come, my dear Cynthia, Mr Brisk, we'll go see Sapho, though my Lord won't.

Cyn. I'll wait upon your Ladyship.

Brisk. Pray, Madam, how old is Lady Sapho?

La. Froth. Three quarters; but I swear she has a world of wit, and can sing a tune already. My Lord, won't you go? Won't you? What, not to see Sapho? Pray, my Lord, come see little Sapho—I knew you could not stay.

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SCENE XII.

CYNTHIA alone.

Cyn. 'Tis not so hard to counterfeit joy in the depth of affliction, as to dissemble mirth in company of fools—Why should I call 'em fools? The world thinks better of 'em; for these have quality and education, wit and fine conversation, are receiv'd and admir'd by the world—If not, they like and admire themselves—and why is not that true wisdom? for 'tis happiness: and for ought I know, we have misapply'd the name all this while, and mistaken the thing: since

If happiness in self-content is plac'd,

The wise are wretched, and fools only bless'd.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

MELLEFONT and CYNTHIA.

CYNTHIA.

I HEARD him loud as I came by the closet-door, and my Lady with him, but she seem'd to moderate his passion.

Mel. Ay, hell thank her, as gentle breezes moderate a fire; but I shall counterwork her spells, and ride the witch in her own bridle.

Cyn. It's impossible; she'll cast beyond you still—
I'll lay my life it will never be a match.

Mel. What?

Cyn. Between you and me.

Mel. Why so?

Cyn. My mind gives me it won't—because we are both willing; we each of us strive to reach the goal, and hinder one another in the race; I swear it never does well when the parties are so agreed—For when people walk hand in hand, there's neither overtaking nor meeting: we hunt in couples, where we both pursue the same game, but forget one another; and 'tis because we are so near that we don't think of coming together.

Mel. Hum! gad, I believe there's something in't:—
marriage is the game that we hunt, and while we think

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that we only have it in view, I don't see but we have it in our power.

Cyn. Within reach; for example, give me your hand; you have look'd thro' the wrong end of the perspective all this while; for nothing has been between us but our fears.

Mel. I don't know why we should not steal out of the house this very moment, and marry one another, without consideration, or the fear of repentance. Pox o' fortune, portion, settlements and jointures!

Cyn. Ay, ay, what have we to do with them? you know we marry for love.

Mel. Love, love, downright very villainous love.

Cyn. And he that can't live upon love, deserves to die in a ditch.——Here then, I give you my promise, in spite of duty, any temptation of wealth, your inconstancy, or my own inclination to change——

Mel. To run most wilfully and unreasonably away with me this moment, and be married.

Cyn. Hold——Never to marry any body else.

Mel. That's but a kind of negative consent.—Why, you won't baulk the frolic?

Cyn. If you had not been so assur'd of your own conduct, I would not—but 'tis but reasonable that since I consent to like a man without the vile consideration of money, he should give me a very evident demonstration of his wit: therefore let me see you undermine my Lady Touchwood, as you boasted, and force her to give her consent, and then——

Mel. I'll do't.

Cyn. And I'll do't.

Mel. This very next ensuing hour of eight o'clock is the last minute of her reign, unless the devil assist her in *propria persona*.

Cyn. Well, if the devil should assist her, and your plot miscarry?——

Mel. Ay, what am I to trust to then?

Cyn. Why, if you give me very clear demonstration that it was the devil, I'll allow for irresistible odds. But if I find it to be only chance, or destiny, or unlucky stars,

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on any thing but the very devil. I'm inexorable; only
still I'll keep my word, and live a maid for your sake.

What? And you won't die one, for your own, so still
there's hope.

Careless. Here's my mother-in-law, and your friend Care-
less; I would not have 'em see us together yet.

S C E N E II.

CARELESS and Lady PLYANT.

La. Ply. I swear, Mr Careless, you are very alluring—
and say so many fine things, and nothing is so moving
to me as a fine thing. Well, I must do you this justice,
and declare in the face of the world, never any body
gain'd so far upon me as yourself; with blushes I must
own it, you have shaken, as I may say, the very founda-
tion of my honour—Well, sure if I escape your impor-
tunities, I shall value myself as long as I live. I swear,

Care. And despise me? [*Sighing.*]

La. Ply. The last of any man in the world, by my
purity: now you make me swear—O gratitude forbid,
that I should ever be wanting in a respectful acknow-
ledgment of an entire resignation of all my best wishes,
for the person and parts of so accomplish'd a person,
whose merit challenges much more, I'm sure, than my
illiterate praises can description—

Care. in a whining tone.] Ah Heav'ns, Madam, you
ruin me with kindness: your charming tongue pursues
the victory of your eyes, while at your feet your poor
adorer dies.

La. Ply. Ah! very fine.

Care. still whining.] Ah, why are you so fair, so be-
witching fair? O, let me grow to the ground here, and
feast upon that hand; O, let me press it to my heart,
my trembling heart; the nimble movement shall instruct
your pulse, and teach it to alarm desire. — Zoons!
I'm almost at the end of my cant, if she does not yield
quickly. [*Aside.*]

La. Ply. O, that's so passionate and fine, I cannot hear
no—I cannot live if I stay, and must leave you.

Care. And must you leave me? Rather let me languish

ACT IV. THE DOUBT-DEALER. 31

out a wretched life, and breathe my soul beneath your feet. I must say the same thing over again, and can't help it. *[Aside.]*

La. Ply. I swear I'm ready to languish too. O my honour! whither is it going? I protest you have given me the palpitation of the heart.

Care. Can you be so cruel? — 2

La. Ply. O rise, I beseech you, say no more till you rise — why did you kneel so long? I swear I was so transported, I did not see it. — Well, to shew you how far you have gain'd upon me, I assure you if Sir Paul should die, of all mankind there's none I'd sooner make my second choice.

Care. O Heav'n! I can't outlive this night without your favour — I feel my spirits faint, a general dampness overpreads my face, a cold deadly dew already vents through all my pores, and will to-morrow wash me for ever from your sight, and drown me in my tomb.

La. Ply. O you have conquer'd! sweet, melting, moving Sir, you have conquer'd — What heart of marble can refrain to weep, and yield to such sad sayings — *[Cries.]*

Care. I thank Heav'n they are the saddest that I ever said — Oh! — I shall never contain laughter. *[Aside.]*

La. Ply. Oh, I yield myself all up to your uncontrollable embraces. — Say, thou dear dying man, when, where, and how! — Ah, there's Sir Paul.

Care. Shife, yonder's Sir Paul! but if he were not come — I'm so transported I cannot speak — This note will inform you. *[Gives her a note.]*

S C E N E III.
Lady PLYANT, Sir PAUL, CYNTHIA.

Sir Paul. Thou art my tender lambkin, and shalt do what thou wilt — But endeavour to forget this Mellefour.

Cyn. I would obey you to my power, Sir; but if I have not him, I have sworn never to marry.

Sir Paul. Never to marry! Heav'n forbid: must I neither have sons nor grandsons? must the family of the Plyants be utterly extinct for want of issue-male? Oh impiety! But did you swear, did that sweet creature

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swear, ah? How durst you swear without my consent, Gadbud, who am I?

Cyn. Pray, don't be angry, Sir; when I swore, I had your consent: and therefore I swore.

Sir Paul. Why then, the revoking my consent does annul, or make of none effect your oath: so you may swear it again—the law will allow it.

Cyn. Ay, but my conscience never will.

Sir Paul. Gadbud, no matter for that; conscience and law never go together: you must not expect that.

La. Ply. Ay, but Sir Paul, I conceive if she has sworn, she must me, if she has once sworn, it is most unchristian, inhuman, and obscene that she should break it. I'll make up the match again, because Mr Careless said it would oblige him.

Sir Paul. Does your Ladyship conceive so?—Why, I was of that opinion once too—nay, if your Ladyship conceives so, I'm of that opinion again; but I can neither find my Lord nor my Lady, to know what they intend.

La. Ply. I'm satisfy'd that my cousin Mellefont has been much wrong'd.

Cyn. aside. I'm amaz'd to find her of our side, for I'm sure she lov'd him.

La. Ply. I know my Lady Touchwood has no kindness for him; and besides, I have been inform'd by Mr Careless, that Mellefont had never any thing more than a profound respect—That he has own'd himself to be my admirer: 'tis true, but he was never so presumptuous to entertain any dishonourable notions of things; so that if this be made plain—I don't see how my daughter can in conscience, or honour, or any thing in the world—

Sir Paul. Indeed if this be made plain, as my Lady your mother says, child—

La. Ply. Plain! I was inform'd of it by Mr Careless—And I assure you Mr Careless is a person—that has a most extraordinary respect and honour for you, Sir Paul.

Cyn. aside. And for your Ladyship too, I believe, or else you had not chang'd sides so soon: now I begin to find it.

Sir Paul. I am much obliged to Mr Careless really, he

is a person that I have a great value for, not only for that, but because he has a great veneration for your Ladyship.

La. Ply. O las! no, indeed, Sir Paul; 'tis upon your account.

Sir Paul. No; I protest and vow I have no title to his esteem, but in having the honour to appertain in some measure to your Ladyship, that's all.

La. Ply. O law! now I swear and declare, it shan't be so; you are too modest, Sir Paul.

Sir Paul. It becomes me, when there is any comparison made between——

La. Ply. O fy, fy, Sir Paul! you'll put me out of countenance——Your very obedient and affectionate wife; that's all—and highly honour'd in that title.

Sir Paul. Gadsbud, I am transported! Give me leave to kiss your Ladyship's hand.

Cyn. That my poor father should be so very silly! [*Aside.*]

La. Ply. My lip indeed, Sir Paul, I swear you shall.

[*He kisses her, and bows very low.*]

Sir Paul. I humbly thank your Ladyship—I don't know whether I fly on ground, or walk in air:—Gadsbud, she was never thus before.—Well, I must own myself the most beholden to Mr Careless—As sure as can be this is all his doing,—something that he has said; well, 'tis a rare thing to have an ingenious friend. Well, your Ladyship is of opinion that the match may go forward.

La. Ply. By all means—Mr Careless has satisfy'd me of the matter.

Sir Paul. Well, why then, Lamb, you may keep your oath, but have a care of making rash vows; come hither to me and kiss Papa.

La. Ply. I swear and declare I am in such a twitter to read Mr Careless's letter that I can't forbear any longer.

—But though I may read all letters first by prerogative, yet I'll be sure to be unsuspected this time.—*Sir Paul.*

Sir Paul. Did your Ladyship call?

La. Ply. Nay, not to interrupt you, my dear—Only lend me your letter which you had from your steward to-day; I would look upon the account again, and may be increase your allowance.

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Sir Paul. There it is, Madama. Do you want a pen and ink? *[Shows and gives the letter.]*

Do. Ph. No, no, nothing else. I thank you, Sir Paul. — So now I can read my own letter under the cover of his. *[Aside.]*

Sir Paul. He! And wilt thou bring a grandson at nine months end? — He! a brave chopping boy. — I'll fettle a thousand pound a year upon the rogue as soon as ever he looks me in the face, I will, Gadsbud. I'm overjoy'd to think I have any of my family that will bring children into the world; for I would fain have some resemblance of myself in my posterity. He, Thy? Can't you contrive that affair, girl? Do, gadsbud, think on thy old father; heh! Make the young rogue as like as you can.

Cyn. I am glad to see you so merry, Sir.

Sir Paul. Merry! Gadsbud I am serious; I'll give thee five hundred pound for every inch of him that resembles me. Ah this eye, this left eye! a thousand pound for this left eye. This has done execution in its time, girl. Why, thou hast my leer, huffy; just my father's leer. — Let it be transmitted to the young by the help of imagination; why, 'tis the mark of the family. Thy. Our house is distinguished by a large hanging eye, as the house of Austria is by a thick lip. — When I was of your age, huffy, I would have held fifty to one I could have drawn my own picture. — Gadsbud, I could have done — not so much as you neither; — but — nay, don't blush —

Cyn. I don't blush, Sir, for I vow I don't understand —

Sir Paul. Pshaw, pshaw, you fib, you baggage, you do understand; and you shall understand. Come, don't be so nice, gadsbud don't learn after your mother-in-law my lady here; marry, Heaven forbid that you should follow her example, that would spoil all indeed. Bleis us, if you should turn a vagarie and make a rash resolution on your wedding-night to die a maid, as she did; all were ruin'd; all my hopes lost. — My heart would break, and my estate would be left to the wide world; he! I hope you are a better Christian than to think of living a nun; he! Answer me.

Cyn. I'm all obedience, Sir, to your commands.

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La. Ply. having read the letter.] O dear Mr. Careless! I swear he writes charmingly, and he looks charmingly; and he has charm'd me as much as I have charm'd him; and so I'll tell him in the wardrobe when 'tis dark on O2 crimine! I hope Sir Paul has not seen both letters. *[Putteth wrong letter hastily up, and gives him her own.]* Sir Paul, here's your letter, to-morrow morning I'll send accounts to your advantage.

SCENE IV.

To them BRISK.

Brisk. Sir Paul, gad! had you're an uncivil person, let me tell you, and all that; and I did not think it had been in you.

Sir Paul. O law! what's the matter now? I hope you are not angry, Mr. Brisk.

Brisk. Deuce take me, I believe you intend to marry your daughter yourself. You're always brooding over her like an old hen, as if she were not well hatch'd. I gad, he!

Sir Paul. Good, strange! Mr. Brisk is such a merry facetious person, he, he, he! No, no, I have done with her, I have done with her now.

Brisk. The fiddles have staid this hour in the hall, and my Lord Froth wants a partner; we can never begin without her.

Sir Paul. Go, go, child; go get you gone and dance, and be merry; I'll come and look at you by and by.—Where's my son Mellefont?

La. Ply. I'll send them to him, I know where he is—

Brisk. Sir Paul, will you send Careless into the hall if you meet him.

Sir Paul. I will, I will; I'll go and look for him on purpose.

SCENE V.

Brisk alone.

Brisk. So now they are all gone, and I have an opportunity to practise.—Ah! my dear Lady Froth! she's a most engaging creature, if she were not so fond of that damn'd coxcomby lord of hers; and yet I am forced to allow him out too to keep in with him.—No matter.

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She's a woman of parts, and i'gad parts will carry her. She said she would follow me into the gallery—Now, to make my approaches.—Hem, hem! Ah, Ma—[Bow.]
 dam!—Pox on't, why should I disparage my parts by thinking what to say? None but dull-rogues *think*; witty men, like rich fellows, are always ready for all expences, while your blockheads, like poor needy scoundrels, are forced to examine their stock, and forecast the charges of the day. Here she comes; I'll seem not to see her, and try to win her with a new airy invention of my own, hem!

SCENE VI.

To him Lady FROTH.

Brisk sings, walking about,] I'm sick with love, ha, ha, ha!

pr'ythee come cure me,

I'm sick with, &c.

O ye powers! O my Lady Froth, my Lady Froth, my Lady Froth! Heigho! Break heart. Gods, I thank you.

[Stands musing, with his arms across.]

La. Froth. O heav'ns! Mr Brisk, what's the matter?

Brisk. My Lady Froth! Your Ladyship's most humble servant;—the matter, Madam? nothing, Madam, nothing at all i'gad. I was fallen into the most agreeable amusement in the whole province of contemplation: that's all.—I'll seem to conceal my passion, and that will look like respect.

[Aside.]

La. Froth. Bless me! why did you call out upon me so loud?

Brisk. O Lord; I, Madam? I beseech your Ladyship—when?

La. Froth. Just now as I came in: bless me! why, don't you know it?

Brisk. Not I, let me perish.—But did I?—strange! I confess your Ladyship was in my thoughts, and I was in a sort of a dream that did in a manner represent a very pleasing object to my imagination, but—but did I indeed?—To see how love and murder will out. But did I really name my Lady Froth?

La. Froth. Three times aloud, as I love letters—But did you talk of love? O Parnassus! who would have thought Mr Brisk could have been in love, ha, ha, ha!

ACT IV. THE DOUBLE DECEIT

Brisk. O Heavens! I thought you could have no mistrels but the nine miles.

Brisk. No more I have. P'gad, for I adore 'em all in your Ladyship. — Let me perish, I don't know whether to be splenetic, or airy upon't; the duce take me if I can tell whether I am glad or sorry that your Ladyship has made the discovery.

La. Froth. O be merry by all means — Prince Volscius in love! ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. O barbarous, to turn me into ridicule! Yet, ha, ha, ha! the duce take me, I can't help laughing myself, ha, ha, ha! yet by Heavens I have a violent passion for your Ladyship, seriously.

La. Froth. Seriously? ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Seriously, ha, ha, ha! gad I have, for all I laugh.

La. Froth. Ha, ha, ha! what d'ye think I laugh at?

Brisk. Me, i gad, ha, ha, ha!

La. Froth. No, the duce take me if I don't laugh at myself; for hang me if I have not a violent passion for Mr Brisk, ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Seriously?

La. Froth. Seriously, ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. That's well enough; let me perish, ha, ha, ha! O miraculous, what a happy discovery! Ah, my dear charming Lady Froth!

La. Froth. Oh my adored Mr Brisk! [Embrace.]

SCENE VII.

To them Lord FROTH.

La. Froth. The company are all ready. — How now?

Brisk. Zoons, Madam, there's my Lord. [Safely to her.]

La. Froth. Take no notice, — but observe me. — Now cast off, and meet me at the lower end of the room, and then join hands again. I would teach my Lord this dance, purely, but I vow, Mr Brisk, I can't tell how to come so near any other man. — Oh, here's my Lord, now you shall see me do it with him. [They pretend to practise part of a Country Dance.]
La. Froth. Oh I see there's no harm in it. — But I have a great deal to say to you, Mr Brisk, could have a familiar conversation with you.

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La. Froth. Shall you and I do our close dance, to show Mr Brisk?

L. Froth. No, my dear, do it with him.

La. Froth. I'll do it with him, my Lord, when you are out of the way.

Brisk. That's good, I gad, that's good, deuce take me, I can hardly hold laughing in his face.

La. Froth. Any other time, my dear, or we'll dance it below.

La. Froth. With all my heart.

Brisk. Come, my Lord, I'll wait on you. — My charming witty angel!

La. Froth. We shall have whispering time enough, you know, since we are partners.

SCENE VIII.

Lady PLYANT and CARELESS.

La. Ply. O Mr Careless, Mr Careless, I'm ruin'd, I'm undone.

Care. What's the matter, Madam?

La. Ply. O the unluckiest accident, I'm afraid I shan't live to tell it you.

Care. Heaven forbid! what is it?

La. Ply. I'm in such a fright—the strangest quandary and premunire—I'm all over in a universal agitation, I dare swear every circumstance of me trembles.—O your letter, your letter! by an unfortunate mistake, I have given Sir Paul your letter instead of his own.

Care. That was unlucky.

La. Ply. O yonder he comes reading of it; for Heaven's sake step in here and advise me quickly before he sees.

SCENE IX.

Sir PAUL with the letter.

Sir Paul. O Providence, what a conspiracy have I discover'd! — But let me see to make an end on't.

[Reads.] Hum.—After supper in the wardrobe by the gallery. If Sir Paul should surprize us, I have a commission from him to treat with you about the very matter of fact.—Matter of fact! very pretty; it seems then I am conducing to my own cuckoldom; why, this is the

very traiterous position of taking up arms by my authority, against my person! Well, let me see—*'Till then I languish in expectation of my adored charmer.*

Now hear how he bro't you with him. Dying NEED CARELESS. Gadsbud, wou'd that were matter of fact too! Die and be damn'd, for a Judas Maccabeus, and Iscariot both. O friendship! what art thou but a name? Hencesforward let no man make a friend that would not be a cuckold: for whomsoever he receives into his bosom, will find the way to his bed, and there return his caresses with interest to his wife. Have I for this been pinion'd night after night, for three years past? have I been swath'd in blankets 'till I have been even depriv'd of motion? have I approach'd the marriage-bed with reverence as to a sacred shrine, and deny'd myself the enjoyment of lawful domestic pleasures to preserve its purity, and must I now find it polluted by foreign iniquity? O my Lady PLYANT, you were chaste as ice, but you are melted now, and false as water. But providence has been constant to me in discovering this conspiracy; still I am beholden to Providence; if it were not for Providence, sure, poor Sir Paul, thy heart would break.

S C E N E X.

To him Lady PLYANT.

La. Ply. So, Sir, I see you have read the letter.— Well, now, Sir Paul, what do you think of your friend Careless? has he been treacherous, or did you give his insolence a licence to make trial of your wife's suspected virtue? D'ye see here? [*Snatches the letter as in anger.*] Look, read it; Gads my life, if I thought it were so, I would this moment renounce all communication with you. Ungrateful monster! He, is it so? ay, I see it, a plot upon my honour; your guilty cheeks confess it: Oh where shall wrong'd virtue fly for reparation? I'll be divorc'd this instant.

Sir Paul. Gadsbud, what shall I say? this is the strangest surprize! why, I don't know any thing at all, nor I don't know whether there be any thing at all in the world or no.

La. Ply. I thought I should try you, false man. I

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that never dissembled in my life : yet, to make trial of you, pretended to like that monster of iniquity, Careless, and found out that contrivance to let you see this letter ; which now I find was of your own inditing—I do, Heathen, I do ; see my face no more ; I'll be divorced presently.

Sir Paul. O strange, what will become of me ?—I'm so amaz'd, and so overjoy'd, so afraid, and so sorry.—But did you give me this letter on purpose, he ? did you ?

La. Ply. Did I ? do you doubt me, Turk, Saracen ? I have a cousin that's a proctor in the Commons, I'll go to him instantly.

Sir Paul. Hold, stay, I beseech your Ladyship—I'm so overjoy'd, stay, I'll confess all.

La. Ply. What will you confess, Jew ?

Sir Paul. Why now as I hope to be saved, I had no hand in this letter.—Nay, hear me, I beseech your Ladyship : the devil take me now if he did not go beyond my commission.—If I desir'd him to do any more than speak a good word only just for me ; Gadsbud, only for poor Sir Paul, I'm an anabaptist, or a Jew, or what you please to call me.

La. Ply. Why, is not here matter of fact ?

Sir Paul. Ay, but by your own virtue and continency that matter of fact is all his own doing.—I confess I had a great desire to have some honours conferred upon me, which ly all in your Ladyship's breast, and he being a well-spoken man, I desired him to intercede for me.

La. Ply. Did you so, presumption ! Oh, he comes, the Tarquin comes ; I cannot bear his sight.

S C E N E XI.

CARELESS, *Sir PAUL.*

Care. Sir Paul, I'm glad I've met with you : gad I have said all I could, but can't prevail.—Then my friendship to you has carry'd me a little farther in this matter—

Sir Paul. Indeed ?—Well, Sir.—I'll dissemble with him a little. *[Aside.]*

Care. Why, faith, I have in my time known honest

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gentlemen abused by a pretended coyness in their wives, and I had a mind to try my Lady's virtue;—and when I could not prevail for you, gad I pretended to be in love myself.—But all in vain, she would not hear a word upon that subject: then I writ a letter to her; I don't know what effect that will have, but I'll be sure to tell you when I do; though by this light I believe her virtue is impregnable.

Sir Paul. O Providence, Providence! what discoveries are here made? Why, this is better and more miraculous than the rest.

Cara. What do ye mean?

Sir Paul. I can't tell you, I'm so overjoy'd; come along with me to my Lady, I can't contain myself; come, my dear friend.

Cara. So, so, so, this difficulty's over. [Aside.

S C E N E XII.

MELLEFONT, MASKWELL, from different doors.

Mel. Maskwell! I have been looking for you;—'tis within a quarter of eight.

Mask. My Lady is just gone into my Lord's closet, you had best steal into her chamber before she comes, and ly concealed there, otherwise she may lock the door when we are together, and you not easily get in to surprise us.

Mel. He! you say true.

Mask. You had best make haste; for after she has made some apology to the company for her own and my Lord's absence all this while, she'll retire to her chamber instantly.

Mel. I go this moment. Now, Fortune, I defy thee.

S C E N E XIII.

MASKWELL alone.

Mask. I confess you may be allowed to be secure in your own opinion; the appearance is very fair, but I have an aftergame to play that shall turn the tables, and here comes the man that I must manage.

SCENE XIV.

To him Lord Touchwood.

L. Touch. Maskwell, you are the man I wish'd to meet.*Mask.* I am happy to be in the way of your Lordship's commands.*L. Touch.* I have always found you prudent and careful in any thing that has concerned me or my family.*Mask.* I were a villain else.—I am bound by duty and gratitude, and my own inclination, to be ever your Lordship's servant.*L. Touch.* Enough.—You are my friend; I know it. Yet there has been a thing in your knowledge which has concern'd me nearly, that you have concealed from me.*Mask.* My Lord!*L. Touch.* Nay, I excuse your friendship to my unnatural nephew thus far.—But I know you have been privy to his impious designs upon my wife. This ev'ning she has told me all. Her good nature concealed it as long as was possible; but he perseveres so in villainy, that she has told me even you were weary of dissuading him, tho' you have once actually hindered him from forcing her.*Mask.* I am sorry, my Lord, I can't make you an answer: this is an occasion on which I would willingly be silent.*L. Touch.* I know you would excuse him—and I know as well that you can't.*Mask.* Indeed I was in hopes 't had been a youthful heat that might have soon boil'd over; but—*L. Touch.* Say on.*Mask.* I have nothing more to say, my Lord—but to express my concern; for I think his frenzy increases daily.*L. Touch.* How! give me but proof of it, ocular proof, that I may justify my dealing with him to the world, and share my fortunes.*Mask.* O my Lord! consider that is hard: besides, time may work upon him. Then, for me to do it! I have professed an everlasting friendship to him.*L. Touch.* He is your friend, and what am I?*Mask.* I am answered.

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L. Touch. Fear not his displeasure: I will put you out of his and Fortune's power; and for that thou art scrupulously honest, I will secure thy fidelity to him, and give my honour never to own any discovery that you shall make me. Can you give me a demonstrative proof? Speak.

Mask. I wish I could not——To be plain, my Lord, I intended this evening to have tried all arguments to dissuade him from a design which I suspect; and if I had not succeeded, to have informed your Lordship of what I knew.

L. Touch. I thank you. What is the villain's purpose.

Mask. He has own'd nothing to me of late, and what I mean now is only a bare suspicion of my own. If your Lordship will meet me a quarter of an hour hence there, in that lobby by my Lady's bedchamber, I shall be able to tell you more.

L. Touch. I will.

Mask. My duty to your Lordship makes me do a severe piece of justice.

L. Touch. I will be secret, and reward your honesty beyond your hopes.

SCENE XV.

SCENE opening, shews Lady Touchwood's chamber.

MELLEFONT *solus.*

Mel. Pray Heaven my aunt keep touch with her affliction.—Oh that her Lord were but sweating behind this hanging, with an expectation of what I shall see!—Hift, she comes.—Little does she think what a mine is just ready to spring under her feet. But to my post.

[Goes behind the hangings.]

SCENE XVI.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

La. Touch. 'Tis eight o'clock; methinks I should have found him here. Who does not prevent the hour of love outstays the time; for to be dully punctual is too slow.—I was accusing you of neglect.

S C E N E XVII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, MASKWELL. Mellefont absconding.

Mask. I confess you do reproach me when I see you here before me; but 'tis fit I should be still behind hand, still to be more and more indebted to your goodness.

La. Touch. You can excuse a fault too well not to have been to blame—Already answer shews you were prepar'd.

Mask. Guilt is ever at a loss, and Confusion waits upon it, when Innocence and bold Truth are always ready for expression——

La. Touch. Not in love; words are the weak support of cold indifference; love has no language to be heard.

Mask. Excess of joy has made me stupid! Thus may my lips be ever clos'd. [*Kisses her.*] And thus—Oh who would not lose his speech upon condition to have joys above it?

La. Touch. Hold, let me lock the door first.

[*Goes to the door.*]

Mask. aside. That I believ'd; 'twas well I left the private passage open.

La. Touch. So that's safe.

Mask. And so may all your pleasures be, and secret as this kiss——

Mel. And may all treachery be thus discover'd.

[*Leaps out.*]

La. Touch. Ah!

[*Shrinks.*]

Mel. Villain!

[*Offers to draw.*]

Mask. Nay then, there's but one way.

[*Runs off.*]

S C E N E XVIII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, MELLEFONT.

Mel. Say you so? were you provided for an escape?

Hold, Madam, you have no more holes to your burrow;

I stand between you and this Sallyport.

La. Touch. Thunder strike thee dead for this deceit; immediate lightning blast thee, me, and the whole world!—Oh! I could rack myself, play the vulture to my own heart, and gnaw it piece-meal, for not boding to me this misfortune.

Mel. Be patient——

La. Touch. Be damn'd.

Mel. Consider I have you on the hook; you will but flounder yourself aweary, and be nevertheless my prisoner.

La. Touch. I'll hold my breath and die but I'll be free.

Mel. O Madam, have a care of dying unprepared; I doubt you have some unrepented sins that may hang heavy, and retard your flight.

La. Touch. O! what shall I do? say? Whither shall I turn? Has hell no remedy?

Mel. None; hell has serv'd you even as heaven has done, left you to yourself.—You're in a kind of Erasmus paradise; yet, if you please, you may make it a purgatory, and with a little penance and my absolution, all this may turn to good account.

La. Touch. aside. Hold in, my passion, and fall; fall a little thou swelling heart; let me have some intermission of this rage, and one minute's coolness to dissemble. *[She weeps.]*

Mel. You have been to blame.—I like those tears, and hope they are of the purest kind—Penitential tears.

La. Touch. O the scene was shifted quick before me—I had not time to think—I was surprized to see a monster in the glass, and now I find 'tis myself. Can you have mercy to forgive the faults I have imagined, but never put in practice!—O consider, consider how fatal you have been to me; you have already kill'd the quiet of this life. The love of you was the first wandering fire that e'er misled my steps, and while I had only that in view, I was betrayed into unthought-of ways of ruin.

Mel. May I believe this true?

La. Touch. O be not cruelly incredulous.—How can you doubt those streaming eyes? Keep the severest eye o'er all my future conduct, and if I once relapse, let me not hope forgiveness; 'twill ever be in your power to ruin me.—My Lord shall sign to your desires; I will myself create your happiness, and Cynthia shall be this night your bride—Do but conceal my failings and forgive.

Mel. Upon such terms I will be ever yours in every honest way.

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S C E N E XIX.

MASKWELL *softly introduces Lord TOUCHWOOD.*
and retires.

Mask. I have kept my word, he's here, but I must not be seen.

S C E N E XX.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, Lord TOUCHWOOD,
MELLEFONT.

L. Touch. Hell and amazement! she's in tears.

La. Touch. kneeling.] Eternal blessings thank you—
Ha! my Lord list'ning! O Fortune has o'erpaid me all,
all! all's my own! [*Aside.*

Mel. Nay, I beseech you rise.

La. Touch. aloud.] Never, never! I'll grow to the
ground, be buried quick beneath it, ere I'll be consen-
ting to so damn'd a sin as incest! unnatural incest!

Mel. Ha!

La. Touch. O cruel man, will you not let me go—I'll
forgive all that's past—O Heav'n, you will not ravish me!

Mel. Damnation!

L. Touch. Monster, dog! your life shall answer this—

[*Draws and runs at Mel. is held by Lady Touchwood.*

La. Touch. O Heavens, my Lord! Hold, hold, for
Heav'n's sake.

Mel. Confusion, my Uncle! O the damn'd forcerefs!

La. Touch. Moderate your rage, good my Lord! he's
mad, alas! he's mad—Indeed he is, my Lord, and knows
not what he does—See how wild he looks.

Mel. By Heaven 'twere senseless not to be mad, and
see such witchcraft.

La. Touch. My Lord, you hear him, he talks idly.

L. Touch. Hence from my sight, thou living infamy
to my name; when next I see that face, I'll write vil-
lain in't with my sword's point.

Mel. Now, by my soul, I will not go 'till I have made
known my wrongs—nay, 'till I have made known yours,
which (if possible) are greater—though she has all the
host of hell her servants.

La. Touch. Alas, he raves! talks very poetry. For

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Heaven's sake away, my Lord; he'll either tempt you to extravagance, or commit some himself.

Mel. Death and Furies! will you not hear me?—why by Heaven she laughs, grins, points to your back; she forks out ruckoldom with her fingers, and you're running horn mad after your fortune.

[As she is going, she turns back and smiles at him.]

L. Touch. I fear he's mad indeed—let's send Maskwell to him.

Mel. Send him to her,

La. Touch. Come, come, good my Lord, my heart akes so, I shall faint if I stay.

SCENE XXI.

MELLEFONT *alone.*

Mel. O I could curse my stars, fate and chance; all causes and accidents of fortune in this life! but to what purpose? Yet, 'death, for a man to have the fruit of all his industry grow full and ripe, ready to drop into his mouth, and just when he holds out his hand to gather it, to have a sudden whirlwind come, tear up tree and all, and bear away the very root and foundation of his hopes; what temper can contain? they talk of sending Maskwell to me; I never had more need of him—But what can he do? imagination cannot form a fairer and more plausible design than this of his which has miscarried—O my precious aunt, I shall never thrive without I deal with the devil, or another woman.

Women like flames have a destroying pow'r,

Ne'er to be quench'd, 'till they themselves devour.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Lady Touchwood and Maskwell.

Lady Touchwood.

WAS' I not lucky?

Mask. Lucky! Fortune is your own, and 'tis her interest so to be, by Heav'n I believe you can control her pow'r, and she fears it; though chance brought my Lord, 'twas your own art that turn'd it to advantage.

La. Touch. 'Tis true it might have been my ruin—
But yonder's my Lord, I believe he's coming to find
you, I'll not be seen.

S C E N E II.

MASKWELL alone.

Mask. So; I durst not own my introducing my Lord,
though it succeeded well for her, for she would have sus-
pected a design which I should have been puzzled to
excuse. My Lord is thoughtful—I'll be so too; yet he
shall know my thoughts, or think he does—

S C E N E III.

To him Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Mask. What have I done?

L. Touch. Talking to himself!

Mask. 'Twas honest—and shall I be rewarded for it?
No, 'twas honest, therefore I shan't;—nay, rather
therefore I ought not; for it rewards itself.

L. Touch. Unequall'd virtue! [*Aside.*

Mask. But should it be known! then I have lost a
friend! He was an ill man, and I have gain'd; for half
myself I lent him, and that I have recall'd; so I have
served myself, and what is yet better, I have served a
worthy lord to whom I owe myself.

L. Touch. Excellent man! [*Aside.*

Mask. Yet I am wretched—O there is a secret burns
within this breast, which should it once blaze forth, would
ruin all, consume my honest character, and brand me
with the name of villain.

L. Touch. Ha!

Mask. Why do I love! Yet Heav'n and my waking
conscience are my witnesses, I never gave one working
thought a vent, which might discover that I lov'd, nor
ever must; no, let it prey upon my heart; for I would
rather die, than seem once, barely seem dishonest:—O
should it once be known I love fair Cynthia, all this that
I have done would look like rival's malice, false friend-
ship to my Lord, and base self-interest. Let me perish
first, and from this hour avoid all sight and speech, and,
if I can, all thought of that pernicious beauty. Ha!

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But what is my distraction doing? I am wildly talking to myself, and some ill chance might have directed malicious ears this way. [*Seems to start, seeing my Lord.*]

L. Touch. Start not—let guilty and dishonest souls start at the revelation of their thoughts, but be thou fix'd, as is thy virtue.

Mask. I am confounded, and beg your Lordship's pardon for those free discourses which I have had with myself.

L. Touch. Come, I beg your pardon that I overheard you, and yet it shall not need—Honest Maskwell! thy and my good genius led me hither—Mine, in that I have discover'd so much manly virtue; thine, in that thou shalt have due reward of all thy worth. Give me thy hand—my nephew is the alone remaining branch of all our ancient family; him I thus blow away, and constitute thee in his room to be my heir——

Mask. Now Heav'n forbid——

L. Touch. No more—I have resolv'd—The writings are ready drawn, and wanted nothing but to be sign'd, and have his name inserted—Yours will fill the blank as well—I will have no reply—Let me command this time; for 'tis the last in which I will assume authority——hereafter you shall rule where I have power.

Mask. I humbly would petition——

L. Touch. Is't for yourself?—[*Mask. pauses.*] I'll hear of nought for any body else.

Mask. Then witness Heav'n for me, this wealth and honour was not of my seeking, nor would I build my fortune on another's ruin: I had but one desire——

L. Touch. Thou shalt enjoy it—If all I'm worth in wealth or interest can purchase Cynthia, she is thine.—I'm sure Sir Paul's consent will follow Fortune; I'll quickly shew him which way that is going.

Mask. You oppress me with bounty; my gratitude is weak, and shrinks beneath the weight, and cannot rise to thank you—What, enjoy my love! Forgive the transports of a blessing so unexpected, so unhop'd for, so unthought of!

L. Touch. I will confirm it, and rejoice with thee.

S C E N E IV.

MASKWELL, alone.

Mask. This is prosp'rous indeed—Why, let him find me out a villain, settled in possession of a fair estate, and full fruition of my love, I'll bear the railing of a losing gamester—But should he find me out before! 'tis dangerous to delay—Let me think—shou'd my Lord proceed to treat openly of my marriage with Cynthia, all must be discover'd, and Mellefont can be no longer blinded.—It must not be; nay, shou'd my Lady know it—ay, then were fine work indeed! Her fury wou'd spare nothing, tho' she involv'd herself in ruin. No, it must be by stratagem—I must deceive Mellefont once more, and get my Lord to consent to my private management. He comes opportunely—Now will I, in my old way, discover the whole and real truth of the matter to him, that he may not suspect one word on't.

No mask like open truth to cover lies,

As to go naked is the best disguise.

S C E N E V.

To him MELLEFONT.

Mel. O Maskwell, what hopes? I am confounded in a maze of thoughts, each leading into another, and all ending in perplexity. My uncle will not see, nor hear me.

Mask. No matter, Sir, don't trouble your head, all's in my power.

Mel. How, for Heav'n's sake?

Mask. Little do you think that your aunt has kept her word.—How the devil she wrought my Lord into this dotage, I know not; but he's gone to Sir Paul about my marriage with Cynthia, and has appointed me his heir.

Mel. The devil he has! What's to be done?

Mask. I have it, it must be by stratagem? for it's in vain to make application to him. I think I have that in my head that cannot fail: where's Cynthia?

Mel. In the garden.

Mask. Let us go and consult her: my life for yours, I cheat my Lord.

S C E N E VI.

Lord TOUCHWOOD, Lady TOUCHWOOD.

La. Touch. Maskwell your heir, and marry Cynthia!

L. Touch. I cannot do too much for so much merit.

La. Touch. But this is a thing of too great moment to be so suddenly resolv'd. Why Cynthia? Why must he be marry'd? Is there not reward enough in raising his low fortune, but he must mix his blood with mine, and wed my niece? How know you that my brother will consent, or she? Nay, he himself perhaps may have affections elsewhere.

L. Touch. No, I am convinc'd he loves her.

La. Touch. Maskwell love Cynthia? impossible!

L. Touch. I tell you, he confess'd it to me.

La. Touch. Confusion! how's this? [*Aside.*

L. Touch. His humility long stifled his passion; and his love of Mellefont would have made him still conceal it—But by encouragement I wrung the secret from him; and know he's no way to be rewarded but in her. I'll defer my farther proceedings in it, 'till you have consider'd it; but remember how we are both indebted to him.

S C E N E VII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD alone.

La. Touch. Both indebted to him! Yes, we are both indebted to him, if you knew all, villain! Oh, I am wild with this surprise of treachery: it is impossible, it cannot be.—He love Cynthia! What, have I been bawd to his designs, his property only, a baiting place! Now I see what made him false to Mellefont.—Shame and distraction! I cannot bear it, oh! what woman can bear to be a property? To be kindled to a flame, only to light him to another's arms; oh! that I were fire indeed, that I might burn the vile traitor. What shall I do? How shall I think? I cannot think.—All my designs are lost, my love unsated, my revenge unfinish'd, and fresh cause of fury from unthought of plagues.

S C E N E VIII.

To her Sir PAUL.

Sir Paul. Madam, sister, my lady sister, did you see my lady, my wife?

La. Touch. Oh! torture!

Sir Paul. Gadsbud, I can't find her high nor low; where can she be, think you?

La. Touch. Where she's serving you, as all your sex ought to be serv'd; making you a beast. Don't you know that you're a fool, brother?

Sir Paul. A fool; he, he, he, you're merry—No, no, not I, I know no such matter.

La. Touch. Why then you don't know half your happiness.

Sir Paul. That's a jest with all my heart, faith and troth,—But hark'ye, my Lord told me something of a revolution of things; I don't know what to make on't, —Gadsbud, I must consult my wife,—he talks of disinheriting his nephew; and I don't know what.—Look you, Sister, I must know what my girl has to trust to; or not a syllable of a wedding, gadsbud—to shew you that I am not a fool.

La. Touch. Hear me; consent to the breaking off this marriage, and the promoting any other, without consulting me, and I'll renounce all blood, all relation and concern with you for ever,—nay, I'll be your enemy, and pursue you to destruction, I'll tear your eyes out, and tread you under my feet.

Sir Paul. Why, what's the matter now? Good Lord, what's all this for? Pooh, here's a joke indeed—Why, where's my wife?

La. Touch. With Careless, in the close harbour; he may want you by this time, as much as you want her.

Sir Paul. O, if she be with Mr Careless, 'tis well enough.

La. Touch. Fool, sot, insensible ox! but remember what I said to you, or you had better eat your own horns, by this light you had.

Sir Paul. You're a passionate woman, gadsbud,—

But to say truth, all our family are choleric; I am the only peaceable person amongst 'em.

S C E N E IX.

MELLEFONT, MASKWELL, and CYNTHIA.

Mel. I know no other way but this he has propos'd; if you have love enough to run the venture.

Cyn. I don't know whether I have love enough—— but I find I have obstinacy enough to pursue whatever I have once resolv'd; and a true female courage to oppose any thing that resists my will, tho'twere reason itself.

Mask. That's right,—Well, I'll secure the writings, and run the hazard along with you.

Cyn. But how can the coach and six horses be got ready without suspicion?

Mask. Leave it to my care; that shall be so far from being suspected, that it shall be got ready by my Lord's own order.

Mel. How?

Mask. Why, I intend to tell my Lord the whole matter of our contrivance, that's my way.

Mel. I don't understand you.

Mask. Why, I'll tell my Lord, I laid this plot with you, on purpose to betray you; and that which put me upon it, was, the finding it impossible to gain the Lady any other way, but in the hopes of her marrying you.—

Mel. So——

Mask. So, why so, while you're busied in making yourself ready, I'll wheedle her into the coach; and instead of you, borrow my Lord's chaplain, and so run away with her myself.

Mel. O I conceive you, you'll tell him so?

Mask. Tell him so! ay, why, you don't think I mean to do so?

Mel. No, no; ha, ha, I dare swear thou wilt not.

Mask. Therefore, for our farther security, I would have you disguis'd like a parson, that if my Lord should have curiosity to peep, he may not discover you in the coach, but think the cheat is carried on as he would have it.

Mel. Excellent Maskwell! thou wert certainly meant

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for a statesman or a Jesuit, — but thou art too honest for one, and too pious for the other.

Mask. Well, get yourselves ready, and meet me in half an hour, yonder in my Lady's dressing-room; go by the back stairs, and so we may slip down without being observ'd — I'll send the chaplain to you with his robes; I have made him my own, — and ordered him to meet us to-morrow morning at St Albans; there we will sum up this account, to all our satisfactions.

Mal. Should I begin to thank or praise thee, I should waste the little time we have.

SCENE X.

CYNTHIA, MASKWELL.

Mask. Madam, you will be ready?

Cyn. I will be punctual to the minute. *[Going.]*

Mask. Stay, I have a doubt — upon second thoughts we had better meet in the chaplain's chamber here, the corner chamber at this end of the gallery; there is a back way into it, so that you need not come through this door — and a pair of private stairs leading down to the stables — It will be more convenient.

Cyn. I am guided by you, — but Mellefont will mistake.

Mask. No, no, I'll after him immediately, and tell him.

Cyn. I will not fail.

SCENE XI.

MASKWELL alone.

Mask. Why, *qui vult decipi decipiat*. — 'Tis no fault of mine, I had told 'em in plain terms how easy 'tis for me to cheat 'em; and if they will not hear the serpent's hiss, they must be stung into experience, and future caution. — Now to prepare my Lord to consent to this. —

But first I must instruct my little Levite; there is no plot, public or private, that can expect to prosper without one of them has a finger in't; he promised me to be within at this hour. — Mr Saygrace, Mr Saygrace!

[Goes to the chamber door, and knocks.]

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S C E N E XII.

MASKWELL, SAYGRACE.

Mr Saygrace, looking out. Sweet Sir, I will but pen the last line of an acrostic, and be with you in the twinkling of an ejaculation, in the pronouncing of an Amen, or before you can —

Mask. Nay, good Mr Saygrace, do not prolong the time, by describing to me the shortness of your stay; rather if you please, defer the summing of your wit, and let us talk about our business, it shall be fittes in your way.

Say. enters. You shall prevail, I would break off in the middle of a sermon to do you a pleasure.

Mask. You could not do me a greater, — except — the business in hand — Have you provided a habit for Mellefont?

Say. I have; they are ready in my chamber, together with a clean starch'd bands and cuffs.

Mask. Good; let them be carried to him — Have you starch'd the gown sleeve, that he may be puzzled, and waste time in putting it on?

Say. I have; the gown will not be indued without perplexity.

Mask. Meet me in half an hour, here in your own chamber. When Cynthia comes, let there be no light, and do not speak, that she may not distinguish you from Mellefont. I'll urge haste, to excuse your silence.

Say. You have no more commands?

Mask. None, your text is short.

Say. But pithy; and I will handle it with discretion.

Mask. It will be the first you have to serv'd.

S C E N E XIII.

LORD TOUCHWOOD, MASKWELL.

L. Touch. Sure I was born to be controuled by those I should command: my very slaves will shortly give me rules how I should govern them.

Mask. I am concern'd to see your Lordship discompos'd —

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L. Touch. Have you seen my wife lately, or disobligh'd her?

Mask. No, my Lord. What can this mean? [*Aside.*]

L. Touch. Then Mellefont has urg'd somebody to in-
sult her—Something she has heard of you which car-
ries her beyond the bounds of patience.

Mask. This I fear'd. [*Aside.*] Did not your Lordship
tell her of the honours you design'd me?

L. Touch. Yes.

Mask. 'Tis that: you know my Lady has a high spi-
rit, she thinks I am unworthy.

L. Touch. Unworthy! 'Tis an ignorant pride in her
to think so—Honesty to me is true nobility. How-
ever, 'tis my will it shall be so, and that shou'd be con-
vincing to her as much as reason.——By Heaven, I'll
not be wife-ridden! were it possible, it should be done
this night.

Mask. By Heav'n, he meets my wishes. [*Aside.*] Few
things are impossible to willing minds.

L. Touch. Instruct me how this may be done, you shall
see I want no inclination.

Mask. I had laid a small design for to-morrow, (as
love will be inventing), which I thought to communi-
cate to your Lordship—but it may be as well done to-
night.

L. Touch. Here's company.——Come this way, and
tell me.

SCENE XIV.

CARELESS and CYNTHIA.

Care. Is not that he now gone out with my Lord?

Cyn. Yes.

Care. By Heav'n, there's treachery!—The confusion
that I saw your father in, my Lady Touchwood's passion,
with what imperfectly I overheard between my Lord
and her, confirm me in my fears. Where's Mellefont?

Cyn. Here he comes.

Care. Here he comes. What you hear could have believ'd from my suspicions.

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SCENE XV.

To them MELLEFONT.

Cyn. Did Maskwell tell you any thing of the Chaplain's chamber?

Mel. No. My dear, will you get ready—the things are all in my chamber: I want nothing but the habit.

Care. You are betray'd; and Maskwell is the villain I always thought him.

Cyn. When you were gone, he said his mind was chang'd, and bid me meet him in the Chaplain's room, pretending immediately to follow you, and give you notice.

Mel. How?

Care. There's Saygrace tripping by with a bundle under his arm—He cannot be ignorant that Maskwell means to use his chamber; let's follow and examine him.

Mel. 'Tis loss of time—I cannot think him false.

SCENE XVI.

CYNTHIA, Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Cyn. My Lord musing!

L. Touch. He has a quick invention, if this were suddenly design'd—Yet he says he had prepar'd my Chaplain already.

Cyn. How's this! Now I fear indeed.

L. Touch. Cynthia here! Alone, fair Cousin, and melancholy?

Cyn. Your Lordship was thoughtful.

L. Touch. My thoughts were on serious business, not worth your hearing.

Cyn. Mine were on treachery concerning you, and may be worth your hearing.

L. Touch. Treachery concerning me! pray, be plain—Hark, what noise!

Mask. within.] Will you not hear me?

L. Touch. within.] No, monster, traitor! no.

Cyn. My Lady and Maskwell! this may be lucky—My Lord, let me intreat you to stand behind this screen, and listen; perhaps this chance may give you proof of what you ne'er could have believ'd from my suspicions.

SCENE XVII.

*Lady TOUCHWOOD with a dagger, MASKWELL.
Cynthia and Lord Touchwood abscond, listening.*

L. Touch. You want but leisure to invent fresh falsehood, and soothe me to a fond belief of all your fictions; but I will stab the lie that's forming in your heart, and have a sin, in pity to your soul.

Mask. Strike then—since you will have it so.

La. Touch. Ha! a steady villain to the last!

Mask. Come, why do you dally with me thus?

La. Touch. Thy stubborn temper shocks me, and you knew it would—This is sunning all, and not courage: no, I know thee well; but thou shalt miss thy aim.

Mask. Ha, ha, ha!

La. Touch. Ha! do you mock my rage? Then this shall punish your fond, rash contempt! Again smile!

[Goes to strike.

And such a smile as speaks in ambiguity!

Ten thousand meanings lurk in each corner of that various face.

O that they were written in thy heart,

That I, with this, might lay thee open to my sight!

But then 'twill be too late to know——

Thou hast, thou hast found the only way to turn my rage; too well thou know'st my jealous soul cou'd never bear uncertainty. Speak then, and tell me—Yet are you silent? Oh, I am wilder'd in all passions! But thus my anger melts. *[Weeps.]* Here, take this poniard, for my very spirits faint, and I want strength to hold it, thou hast disarm'd my soul. *[Gives the dagger.*

L. Touch. Amazement shakes me!—Where will this end?

Mask. So, 'tis well—let your wild fury have a vent; and when you have temper, tell me.

La. Touch. Now, now, now I am calm, and can hear you.

Mask. aside.] Thanks, my invention; and now I have it for you.—First tell me what urg'd you to this violence? For your passion broke in such imperfect terms, that yet I am to learn the cause.

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La. Touch. My Lord himself surpriz'd me with the news, you were to marry Cynthia—That you had own'd your love to him, and his indulgence would assist you to attain your ends.

Cyn. How, my Lord!

L. Touch. Pray forbear all resentments for a while, and let us hear the rest.

Mask. I grant you in appearance all is true; I seem'd consenting to my Lord; nay, transported with the blessing—But could you think that I, who had been happy in your lov'd embraces, could e'er be fond of an inferior slavery?

L. Touch. Ha! O poison to my ears! what do I hear!

Cyn. Nay, good my Lord, forbear resentment, let us hear it out.

L. Touch. Yes, I will contain, tho' I cou'd burst.

Mask. I that had wanton'd in the rich circle of your world of love, cou'd be confin'd within the puny province of a girl? No—Yet tho' I dote on each last favour more than all the rest, tho' I would give a limb for every look you cheaply throw away on any other object of your love, yet so far I prize your pleasures o'er my own, that all this seeming plot that I have laid, has been to gratify your taste, and cheat the world, to prove a faithful rogue to you.

L. Touch. If this were true—But how can it be?

Mask. I have so contriv'd, that Mellefont will presently, in the Chaplain's habit, wait for Cynthia in your dressing-room; but I have put the change upon her, that she may be elsewhere employ'd—Do you procure her night-gown, and with your hoods tied over your face, meet him in her stead; you may go privately by the back stairs, and unperceiv'd, there you may propose to reinstate him in his uncle's favour, if he'll comply with your desires; his case is desperate, and I believe he'll yield to any conditions—If not, here take this; you may employ it better, than in the heart of one who is nothing when not yours.

[Gives the dagger.]

La. Touch. Thou can't deceive every body—Nay, thou hast deceiv'd me; but 'tis as I would wish.—Trusty villain! I could worship thee.

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Mask. No more—it wants but a few minutes of the time; and Mellefont's love will carry him there before his hour.

La. Touch. I go; I fly, incomparable Maskwell!

SCENE XVIII.

MASKWELL, CYNTHIA, Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Mask. So, this was a pinch indeed; my invention was upon the rack, and made discovery of her last plot: I hope Cynthia and my Chaplain will be ready, I'll prepare for the expedition.

SCENE XIX.

CYNTHIA and Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Cyn. Now, my Lord?

L. Touch. Astonishment binds up my rage! Villainy upon villainy! Heav'ns, what a long track of dark deceit has this discover'd! I am confounded when I look back, and want a clue to guide me through the various mazes of unheard-of treachery. My wife! damnation! my hell!

Cyn. My Lord, have patience, and be sensible how great our happiness is, that this discovery was not made too late.

L. Touch. I thank you; yet it may be still too late, if we don't presently prevent the execution of their plots;—Ha! I'll do't. Where's Mellefont, my poor injur'd nephew?—How shall I make him ample satisfaction?—

Cyn. I dare answer for him.

L. Touch. I do him fresh wrong to question his forgiveness; for I know him to be all goodness.—Yet my wife! Damp her.—She'll think to meet him in that dressing-room;—was't not so? And Maskwell will expect you in the Chaplain's chamber?—For once I'll add my plot too—Let us haste to find out, and inform my nephew; and do you, quickly as you can, bring all the company into this gallery.—I'll expose the scoundrel, and the villain.

SCENE XX.

Lord FROTH and Sir PAUL.

L. Froth. By heavens I have slept an age. — Sir Paul, what a clock is it? Past eight, on my conscience; my Lady's is the most inviting couch, and a slumber there is the prettiest amusement! — But where's all the company? —

Sir Paul. The company! Gadsbud, I don't know, my Lord; but here's the strangest revolution, all turn'd topsy-turvy, as I hope for Providence.

L. Froth. O heavens! what's the matter? Where's my wife?

Sir Paul. All turn'd topsy-turvy, as sure as a gun.

L. Froth. How do you mean? My wife!

Sir Paul. The strangest posture of affairs!

L. Froth. What, my wife?

Sir Paul. No, no; I mean the family. — Your Lady's affairs may be in a very good posture; I saw her go in to the garden with Mr Brisk.

L. Froth. How? where? when? what to do?

Sir Paul. I suppose they have been laying their heads together.

L. Froth. How?

Sir Paul. Nay, only about poetry I suppose, my Lord, making couplets.

L. Froth. Couplets!

Sir Paul. O here they come.

SCENE XXI.

To them Lady FROTH, BRISK.

Brisk. My Lord, your humble servant; Sir Paul, yours — the finest night!

La Froth. My dear, Mr Brisk and I have been stargazing I don't know how long.

Sir Paul. Does it not tire your Ladyship? Are not you weary with looking up?

La Froth. Oh no, I love it violently. — My dear, you're melancholy.

L. Froth. No, my dear, I'm but just awake.

La Froth. Snuff some of my spirit of hartshorn.

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L. Froth. I've some of my own. I thank you, my dear.

La. Froth. Well, I swear, Mr Brisk, you understand astronomy like an old Egyptian.

Brisk. Not comparably to your Ladyship; you are the very Cymbia of the skies, and queen of stars.

La. Froth. That's because I have no light but what's by reflection from you, who are the sun.

Brisk. Madam, you have eclips'd me quite, let me perish—I can't answer that.

La. Froth. No matter.—Hark'ee, shall you and I make an almanac together.

Brisk. With all my soul.—Your Ladyship has made me the man in't already, I'm so full of the wounds which you have given.

La. Froth. O finely taken! I swear now you are even with me; O Parnassus, you have an infinite deal of wit.

Sir Paul. So he has, gadsbud, and so has your Ladyship.

S C E N E XXII.

To them Lady PLYANT, CARELESS, CYNTHIA.

La. Ply. You tell me most surprising things; bless me! who would ever trust a man? O my heart aches for fear they should be all deceitful alike.

Care. You need not fear, Madam, you have charms to fix Inconstancy itself.

La. Ply. O dear, you make me blush.

L. Froth. Come, my dear, shall we take leave of my Lord and Lady?

Cyn. They, all wait upon your Lordship presently.

La. Froth. Mr Brisk, my coach shall set you down.

All. What's the matter?

[A great Brisk from the corner of the stage.]

S C E N E XXIII.

To them Lady TOUCHWOOD runs out affrighted, my

Lord after her like a parson.

La. Touch. O I'm betray'd.—Save me, help me!

L. Touch. Now, what evasion, strumpet!

La. Touch. Stand off, let me go.

L. Touch. Go, and thy infamy pursue thee.—You

ACT IV THE DOUBLE DEALER. 83

stare as if you were all amazed—I don't wonder at it—
but too soon you'll know mine and that woman's shame.

S C E N E The Last.

Lord TOUCHWOOD, Lord FROTH, Lady FROTH,
Lady PLYANT, Sir PAUL, CYNTHIA, MELLEFONT,
MASKWELL. *Mellefont disguised in a parson's habit,
and pulling in Maskwell.*

Mel. Nay, by Heaven you shall be seen.—Careless,
your hand.—Do you hold down your head? Yes, I am
your chaplain; look in the face of your injur'd friend,
thou wonder of all falsehood.

L. Touch. Are you silent, Monsieur?

Mel. Good heavens! how I believ'd and lov'd this
man!—Take him hence, for he's a disease to my sight.

L. Touch. Secure that manifold villain.

[*Servants seize him.*]

Cars. Miracle of ingratitude!

Brisk. This is all very surprising, let me perish.

L. Froth. You know I told you Saturn look'd a little
more angry than usual.

L. Touch. We'll think of punishment at leisure, but
let me hasten to do justice in rewarding virtue and
wrong'd innocence.—Nephew, I hope I have your
pardon and Cynthia's.

Mel. We are your Lordship's creatures.

L. Touch. And be each others comfort.—Let me join
your hands.—Unwearied nights and wishing days at-
tend you both; mutual love, lasting health, and circling
joys tread round each happy year of your long lives.

Let secret villainy from hence be warn'd;

Howe'er in private mischiefs are conceiv'd,

Torture and shame attend their open birth:

Like vipers in the womb base treachery lyes,

Still gnawing that whence first it did arise,

No sooner born but the vile parent dies.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs MOUNTFORD.

COU'D poets but foresee how plays would take,
 Then they cou'd tell what epilogues to make;
 Whether to thank or blame their audience most;
 But that late knowledge does much hazard cost;
 'Till dice are thrown there's nothing won or lost.
 So, 'till the thief has stol'n, he cannot know
 Whether he shall escape the law or no.
 But poets run much greater hazards far
 Than they who stand their trials at the bar:
 The Law provides a curb for its own fury,
 And suffers judges to direct the jury;
 But in this court what diff'rence does appear!
 For ev'ry one's both judge and jury here;
 Nay, and what's worse, an executioner.
 All have a right and title to some part,
 Each chusing that in which he has most art.
 The dreadful men of learning all confound,
 Unless the fable's good and moral sound.
 The vizor-masks, that are in pit or gall'ry,
 Approve or damn the repartee or rail'ry.
 The lady-critics, who are better read,
 Enquire if characters are nicely bred;
 If the soft things are penn'd and spoke with grace,
 They judge of action too, and time, and place;
 In which we do not doubt but they're discerning,
 For that's a kind of assignation learning.
 Beaus judge of dress, the wittlings judge of songs,
 The cuckoldom, of ancient right, to cits belongs.
 Thus poor poets the favour are deny'd,
 Even to make exceptions when they're try'd.
 'Tis hard that they must ev'ry one admit:
 Metbinks I see some faces in the pit,
 Which must of consequence be foes to wit.
 You who can judge to sentence may proceed;
 But though he cannot write, let him be freed
 At least from their contempt who cannot read.



END OF THE DOUBLE DEALER

THE
SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

COMEDY.

BY

Dr BENJ. HOADLY.

EDINBURGH.

Printed by and for **MARTIN & WOTHERSPOON.**

M.DCC.LXVIII.

SCETICIOUS HUSBAND.

T O T H E

R I N G.

YOUR Majesty's goodness in permitting
your royal name to stand before the fol-

lowing piece, is an instance of the greatest
condescension of a great mind. And this per-
mission, after having honoured the perform-
ance of it with your Royal Presence, the more
tendibly touches me, as it will naturally lead
every one to this reflection, that to great an
honour would have been allowed in had it
not appeared free from all offence against the
rules of good-manners and decency.

Thus while your Majesty sits as a watchful
arbitrator of the greatest affairs that ever per-
plexed Europe, you can descend to the inno-
cent amusements of life, and take a pleasure
in favouring an author to add to their num-



We see with pleasure that your Majesty's in-
dignity is not less than the greatness and lustre

TO THE

KING.

SIR,

YOUR Majesty's goodness in permitting your royal name to stand before the following piece, is an instance of the greatest condescension of a great mind. And this permission, after having honoured the performance of it with your Royal Presence, the more sensibly touches me, as it will naturally lead every one to this reflexion, that so great an honour would not have been allowed it, had it not appeared free from all offence against the rules of good-manners and decency.

Thus while your Majesty sits as a watchful arbiter of the greatest affairs that ever perplexed Europe, you can descend to the innocent amusements of life; and take a pleasure in favouring an attempt to add to their number.

We see with joy, in your Majesty, an undeniable proof, that the true greatness and lustre

DEDICATION

in

of a Prince is founded, not upon the magnificence of pomp and show, and power, but upon the whole tenor of a conduct formed for securing and confirming the rights and happiness of his subjects. This being built upon public faith, will always remain plainly legible in the annals of history, when the traces of the most delicate flattery shall be all lost and gone.

When the records of our country shall barely tell the world the glorious appearance in this nation, upon a late trying occasion; and say—That upon a violent attack made upon your crown, all orders and degrees, all sects and parties amongst us, rose up, as one man; not contenting themselves to offer their lives and fortunes in the sounds of formal addresses; but actually pouring out their treasures, and hazarding their persons—That your whole people did not think themselves safe without your safety; nor their religion, laws, and properties secure but in the security of your Royal Person and government—When this shall be told—this alone, this voice of the public, expressed in deeds, will be the highest panegyrick; greater and truer praise, than all the words which invention and art can put together.—But I forgot myself, and my duty.



D E D I C A T I O N.

I ought not, upon the present occasion, to interrupt your cares for the public, any further, than to express my deep sense of your Royal favour and condescension; and to tend up my warmest vows—that your Majesty may long enjoy the fruits of a conduct in government, which is the security to your subjects of all that is valuable upon earth!—That you may live through a course of many years, the delight of your happy people; the example to all the princes around you, of political truth and justice, superior to all the little arts of fraud and perfidy.—And that the succession to the crown of these realms, in your Royal Line, may never fail to establish, and continue the blessings we enjoy, to our latest posterity. I am,

May it please your MAJESTY,

Your MAJESTY's most devoted and

Obedient Subject and Servant,

BENJAMIN HOADLEY,

I ought not upon the present occasion, to
 interest your ears for the public, any but
 what I have to say in the name of the
 Royal favour and consideration, and to send
 up with me Mr. G. and Mr. L. who
 may long enjoy the fruits of a good
 government, which is the favour to your
 self of all that is valuable upon earth. — That
 you may live through a course of many years,
 the better of your duty, the example
 to all the nation, and not of political truth
 and virtue, superior to all the rest of
 the world, and that the government
 be the crown of your duty, in your Royal
 favour, and never all to the public, and
 the public we cannot so much as to

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WILLIAM HOBBS.

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PROLOGUE.

Written by Mr GARRICK.

Spoken by Mr RYAN.

WHILE other culprits brave it to the last,
Nor beg for mercy 'till the judgment's past:
Poets alone, as conscious of their crimes,
Open their trials with imploring rhimes.
Thus cram'd with flattery and low submission,
Each trite dull prologue is the Bard's petition.
A stale device to calm the critic's fury,
And bribe at once the judges and the jury.

But what avail such poor repeated arts?
The whimp'ring scribbler ne'er can touch your hearts:
Nor ought an ill-tim'd pity to take place—
Fast as they rise destroy th' increasing race:
The vermin else will run the nation o'er—
By saving one, you breed a million more.

Though disappointed authors rail and rage,
At fancied parties, and a senseless age,
Yet still has justice triumph'd on the stage.
Thus speaks, and thinks the author of to-day,
And saying this has little more to say.
He asks no friend his partial zeal to shew,
Nor fears the groundless censures of a foe;
He knows no friendship can protect the fool,
Nor will an audience be a party's tool.
'Tis inconsistent with a free-born spirit,
To side with folly or to injure merit.
By your decision he must fall or stand,
Nor, though he feels the lash, will blame the hand.

Dramatis Personæ:

Mr. STRICTLAND,

FRANKLY,

BELLAMY,

RANGER, MATHIAS,

JACK MEGGOT,

BUCKLE,

TESTER,

SERVANT to Ranger,

SIMON.

Mrs. STRICTLAND,

CLARINDA,

JACINTHA,

LUCETTA,

LANDLADY,

MILLINER,

MAID.

Chairmen, Footmen, &c.

SCENE, LONDON.



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Ranger,
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Ran.

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Ser.

SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Ranger's Chambers in the Temple.

A knocking is heard at the door for some time; when

RANGER enters, having let himself in.

RANGER.

ONCE more I am got safe to the Temple—let me reflect a little—I have set up all night. I have my head full of bad wine, and the noise of oaths, dice, and the damn'd tingling of tavern bells; my spirits jaded, and my eyes sunk in my head: and all this for the conversation of a company of fellows I despise. Their wit lyes only in obscenity, their mirth in noise, and their delight in a box and dice. Honest Ranger, take my word for it, thou art a mighty silly fellow.

Enter SERVANT, with a wig, dress'd.

Where have you been, rascal? If I had not had the key in my pocket, I must have waited at the doot in this dainty dress.

Ser. I was only below combing out your honour's wig.

Ran. Well, give me my cap. [*Pulling off his wig.*]

Why, how like a raking dog do you look, compar'd to that spruce, sober gentleman?—Go, you baster'd devil, and be made fit to be seen.

[*Throwing his wig at the servant.*]

Ser. God, my master's very merry this morning.

[*Exit Servant.*]

THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. ACT I.

Ran. And now for the law, *[Sits down and reads.]*

Tell me no more, I am deceived.

That Cloe's false and common

By Heaven, I tell you, believe'd

She was a new woman

As sure I like'd, as such caref's

She still was constant when possess'd

She could do more for no man

Honest Congreve was a man after my own heart.

SERVANT passes over the stage.

Have you been for the money this morning, as I order'd you?

Ser. No, Sir. You bad me go before you was up—I did not know your honour meant before you went to bed.

Ran. None of your jokes, I pray; but to business—Go to the coffeehouse, and enquire if there has been any letter or message left for me.

Ser. I shall, Sir.

Ran. repeats.] You think she's false, I'm sure she's kind.

I take her body, you her mind.

Which has the better bargain?

*Oh, that I had such a soft, delicious fair, to lull my senses to their desir'd sleep—**[Knocking at the door.]*

Come in.

Enter SIMON.

Oh, Master Simon, is it you? how long have you been in town?

Sim. Just come, Sir, and but for a little time neither; and yet I have as many messages as if we were to stay the whole year round. Here they are, all of them. *[Puts out a number of cards.]* And among them one for your honour.

Ran. reads.] *Clorinda's compliments to her Cousin Ranger, and should be glad to see him for once so little a while, that he can be spar'd from the more weighty business of the law.*—*How can he have the same merry girl I once knew her.*



ACT I. THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. 11

Sim. My Lady is never sad, Sir. *[Knocking at the door.]*

Ran. Pr'ythee, Simon, open the door, won't you?

Enter MILLINER.

Well, child—and who are you?

Mil. Sir, my Mistress gives her service to you, and has sent you home the linen you bespoke.

Ran. Well, Simon, my service to your lady, and let her know I will most certainly wait upon her—I am a little busy, Simon—and so—

Sim. Ah, you're a wag, Master Ranger, you're a wag—but mum for that. *[Exit Sim.]*

Ran. I swear, my dear, you have the prettiest pair of eyes—the loveliest pouring lips—I never saw you before.

Mil. No, Sir! I was always in the shop.

Ran. Were you so? well, and what does your mistress say?—the devil fetch me, child, you look so prettily, that I could not mind one word you said.

Mil. Lard, Sir, you are such another gentleman! why, she says, she is sorry she could not send them sooner. Shall I lay them down?

Ran. No, child. Give 'em to me.——Dear little smiling angel—— *[Catches and kisses her.]*

Mil. I beg, Sir, you would be civil.

Ran. Civil? egad, I think I am very civil. *[Kisses her again.]*

Enter SERVANT and BELLAMY.

Ser. Sir, Mr Bellamy.

Ran. Damn your impertinence.——Oh, Mr Bellamy, your servant.

Mil. What shall I say to my mistress?

Ran. Bid her make half a dozen more; but be sure you bring them home yourself. *[Exit Milliner.]* Pshaw! For Mr Bellamy, how should you like to be served so yourself?

Bell. How can you, Ranger, for Omphale's pleasure, give an innocent girl the pain of heart I am confident she feels? There was a modest blush upon her cheek convinces me she is honest.

Ran. May be so. I was resolved to try, however.

Bel. Fy, Ranger,—will you never think?

Ran. Yes, but I can't be always thinking. The law is a damnable dry study, Mr Bellamy, and without something now and then to amuse and relax, it would be too much for my brain, I promise ye.—But I am a mighty sober fellow grown—Here have I been at it these three hours—but the wenches will never let me alone.—

Bel. Three hours!—Why, do you usually study in such shoes and stockings?

Ran. Rat your inquisitive eyes. *Ex pado Hercules.* Egad, you have me. The truth is, I am but this moment return'd from the tavern. What, Frankly here too!

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. My boy Ranger, I am heartily glad to see you. Bellamy, let me embrace you; you are the person I want. I have been at your lodgings, and was directed hither.

Ran. It is to him then I am oblig'd for this visit: but with all my heart—He is the only man to whom I don't care how much I am oblig'd.

Bel. Your very humble servant, Sir.

Frank. You know, Ranger, I want no inducement to be with you. But—You look sadly—What—No mercilefs jade has—Has she?

Ran. No, no. Sound as a roach, my lad. I only got a little too much liquor last night, which I have not slept off yet.

Bel. Thus, Frankly, it is every day. All the morning his head akes, at noon he begins to clear up, towards evening he is good company, and all night he is carefully providing for the same course the next day.

Ran. Why, I must own, my ghostly father, I did repent a little last night, just to furnish out a decent confession for the day.

Frank. And he is now doing penance for it. Were you his confessor indeed, you could not well desire more.

ACT I. The SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. 13

Ran. Charles, he sets up for a confessor with the worst grace in the world. Here he has been reprovng me for being but decently civil to my milliner. Plague ! because the coldness of his constitution makes him insensible of a fine woman's charms, every body else must be so too.

Bel. I am no less sensible of their charms than you are ; tho' I cannot kiss every woman I meet, or fall in love, as you call it, with every face that has the bloom of youth upon it. I would only have you a little more frugal of your pleasure.

Frank. My dear friend, this is very pretty talking ! But let me tell you, it is in the power of the very first glance from a fine woman utterly to disconcert all your philosophy.

Bel. It must be from a fine woman then : and not such as are generally reputed so——And it must be a thorough acquaintance with her too, that will ever make an impression on my heart.

Ran. Would I could see it once ! For when a man has been all his life hoarding up a stock, without allowing himself common necessaries ; it tickles me to the soul to see him lay it all upon a wrong bottom, and become bankrupt at last.

Bel. Well, I don't care how soon you see it. For the minute I find a woman capable of friendship, love and tenderness, with good sense enough to be always easy, and good nature enough to like me ; I will immediately put it to the trial, which of us shall have the greatest share of happiness from the sex, you or I.

Ran. By marrying her, I suppose ! Capable of friendship, love and tenderness, ha, ha, ha ! That a man of your sense should talk so. If she be capable of love, 'tis all I require of my mistress ; and as every woman, who is young, is capable of love, I am very reasonably in love with every young woman I meet.—My Lord Coke, in a case I read this morning, speaks my sense.

Both. My Lord Coke !

Ran. Yes, my Lord Coke. What he says of one woman, I say of the whole sex, *I take their bodies, you their minds, which has the better bargain?*

Frank. There is no arguing with so great a lawyer. Suppose therefore we adjourn the debate to some other time. I have some serious business with Mr Bellamy, and you want sleep, I am sure.

Ran. Sleep! mere loss of time, and hinderance of business—We men of spirit, Sir, are above it.

Bel. Whither shall we go?

Frank. Into the park. My chariot is at the door.

Bel. Then if my servant calls, you'll send him after us. *[Exeunt.]*

Ran. I will *[Looking on the card.]* Clarinda's compliments—A pox of this head of mine! Never once to ask where she was to be found. It's plain she is not one of us, or I should not have been so remiss in my enquiries.—No matter—I shall meet her in my walks.

SERVANT enters.

Ser. There is no letter nor message, Sir.

Ran. Then my things to dress. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.

A Chamber.

Enter Mrs STRICTLAND, and JACINTHA, meeting.

Mrs Strick. Good-morrow, my dear Jacintha.

Jac. Good-morrow to you, Madam. I have brought my work, and intend to sit with you this morning. I hope you have got the better of your fatigue. Where is Clarinda? I should be glad if she would come, and work with us.

Mrs Strick. She work! She is too fine a lady to do any thing. She is not stirring yet—we must let her have her rest. People of her waste of spirits require more time to recruit again.

Jac. It is pity she should be ever tir'd with what is so

Act I. The SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. 15

agreeable to every body else. I am prodigiously pleas'd with her company.

Mrs Strick. And when you are better acquainted, you will be still more pleas'd with her. You must rally her upon her partner at Bath; for, I fancy, part of her rest has been disturb'd on his account.

Jac. Was he really a pretty fellow?

Mrs Strick. That I can't tell. I did not dance myself, and so did not much mind him. You must have the whole story from herself.

Jac. Oh, I warrant ye, I get it all out. None are so proper to make discoveries in love, as those who are in the secret themselves.

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Madam, Mr Strickland is enquiring for you. Here has been Mr Buckle with a letter from his master, which has made him very angry.

Jac. Mr Bellamy said indeed he would try him once more, but I fear it will prove in vain. Tell your master I am here. [*Exit Lucetta.*] What signifies fortune when it only makes us slaves to other people?

Mrs Strick. Do not be uneasy, my Jacintha. You shall always find a friend in me: but as for Mr Strickland, I know not what ill temper hangs about him lately. Nothing satisfies him. You saw how he received us when we came off our journey. Tho' Clarinda was so good company, he was barely civil to her, and downright rude to me.

Jac. I cannot help saying, I did observe it.

Mrs Strick. I saw you did. Hush! he's here.

Enter Mr STRICTLAND.

Strick. Oh, your servant, Madam! Here, I have received a letter from Mr Bellamy, wherein he desires I would once more hear what he has to say—You know my sentiments—Nay, so does he.

Jac. For Heaven's sake consider, Sir, this is no new affair, no sudden start of passion——We have known each other long. My father valued and lov'd

him, and, I am sure, were he alive, I should have his consent.

Strick. Don't tell me. Your father would not have you marry against his will; neither will I against mine: I am your father now.

Jac. And you take a fatherly care of me.

Strick. I wish I had never had any thing to do with you.

Jac. You may easily get rid of the trouble.

Strick. By listening, I suppose, to the young gentleman's proposals.

Jac. Which are very reasonable in my opinion.

Strick. Oh, very modest ones truly; and a very modest gentleman he is that proposes them! A fool, to expect a lady of thirty thousand pounds fortune, should, by the care and prudence of her guardian, be thrown away upon a young fellow not worth three hundred a-year. He thinks being in love is an excuse for this; but I am not in love. What does he think will excuse me?

Mrs Strick. Well, but Mr Strickland, I think the gentleman should be heard.

Strick. Well, well. Seven o'clock's the time, and if the man has the good fortune, since I saw him last, to persuade some body or other to give him a better estate, I give my consent—not else. His servant waits below. You may tell him, I shall be at home. [*Exit Jacintha.*] But where is your friend, your other half, all this while? I thought you cou'd not have breath'd a minute without your Clarinda.

Mrs Strick. Why the truth is, I was going to see what makes her keep her chamber so long.

Strick. Look ye, Mrs Strickland, you have been asking me for money this morning. In plain terms, not one shilling shall pass through these fingers, till you have clear'd my house of this Clarinda.

Mrs Strick. How can innocent gaiety have offended you? She is a woman of honour, and has as many good qualities—

Strick. As women of honour generally have. I know it, and therefore am uneasy.

Mrs Strick. But, Sir,——

Strick. But, Madam,——Clarinda, nor e'er a rake of fashion in England, shall live in my family to debauch it.

Mrs Strick. Sir, she treated me with so much civility in the country, that I thought I could not do less than invite her to spend as much time with me in town, as her engagements would permit. I little imagin'd you could have been displeas'd at my having so agreeable a companion.

Strick. There was a time when I was company enough for your leisure hours.

Mrs Strick. There was a time when every word of mine was sure of meeting with a smile: but those happy days, I know not why, have been long over.

Strick. I cannot bear a rival even of your own sex. I hate the very name of female friends. No two of you can ever be an hour by yourselves, but one or both are the worse for it.

Mrs Strick. Dear Mr Strickland——

Strick. This I know—and will not suffer.

Mrs Strick. It grieves me, Sir, to see you so much in earnest: but to convince you how willing I am to make you easy in every thing, it shall be my request to her to remove immediately.

Strick. Do it——hark ye——Your request?——Why yours? It's mine——My command——Tell her so——I will be master of my own family, and I care not who knows it.

Mrs Strick. You fright me, Sir,——but it shall be as you please. [*In tears.*]

[*Goes out.*]

Strick. Ha! have I not gone too far? I am not master of myself——Mrs Strickland——[*She returns.*] Understand me right. I do not mean, by what I have said, that I suspect your innocence; but by crushing this growing friendship all at once, I may prevent a train of mischief which you do not foresee. I was perhaps

too harsh, therefore do it in your own way—but let me see the house fairly rid of her. *[Exit Strick.]*

Mrs Strick. His earnestness in this affair amazes me, I am sorry I made this visit to Clarinda—and yet I'll answer for her honour—What can I say to her? Necessity must plead in my excuse—For, at all events, Mr Strickland must be obey'd. *[Exit.]*

S C E N E III.

St James's Park.

Enter BELLAMY and FRANKLY.

Frank. Now, Bellamy, I may unfold the secret of my heart to you with greater freedom; for though Ranger has honour, I am not in a humour to be laugh'd at. I must have one that will bear with my impertinence, soothe me into hope, and, like a friend indeed, with tenderness advise me.

Bel. I thought you appeared more grave than usual.

Frank. Oh! Bellamy, my soul is so full of joy, of pain, hope, despair, and ecstasy, that no word but love is capable of expressing what I feel.

Bel. Is love the secret Ranger is not fit to hear? In my mind he would prove the more able counsellor. And is all the gay indifference of my friend at last reduced to love?

Frank. Even so—Never was prude more resolute in chastity and ill nature, than I was fix'd in indifference: but Love has rais'd me from that inactive state above the being of a man.

Bel. Faith, Charles, I begin to think it has—But pray, bring this rapture into order a little, and tell me regularly, how, where and when?

Frank. If I was not most unreasonably in love, those horrid questions would stop my mouth at once. But as I am arm'd against reason—I answer—at Bath—on Tuesday, she danced and caught me.

Bel. Danc'd?—and was that all? But who is she? What is her name? her fortune? where does she live?

Frank. Hold, hold! not so many hard questions. Have a little mercy. I know but little of her, that's certain; but all I do know you shall have. That evening was the first of her appearing at Bath. The moment I saw her I resolved to ask the favour of her hand; but the easy freedom with which she gave it, and her unaffected good humour during the whole night, gain'd such a power over my heart, as none of her sex could ever boast of before. I waited on her home, and the next morning, when I went to pay the usual compliments, the bird was flown. She had set out for London two hours before, and in a chariot and six—you rogue.

Bel. But was it her own, Charles?

Frank. That I don't know; but it looks better than being dragg'd to town in the stage. That day and the next I spent in enquiries. I waited on the ladies who came with her. They knew nothing of her. So without learning either her name or fortune, I e'en call'd for my boots, and rode post after her.

Bel. And how do you find yourself after your journey?

Frank. Why, as yet, I own, I am but upon a cold scent. But a woman of her sprightliness and gentility cannot but frequent all public places; and when once she is found, the pleasures of the chase will over-pay the pains of rousing her.—Oh! Bellamy, there was something peculiarly charming in her, that seem'd to claim my further acquaintance; and if in the other more familiar parts of life she shine with that superior lustre, and at last I win her to my arms, how shall I bless my resolution in pursuing her!

Bel. But if at last she should prove unworthy—

Frank. I would endeavour to forget her.

Bel. Promise me that, Charles. [*Takes his hand.*] and

I allow—But we are interrupted.

Enter JACK MEGGOT.

J. Meg. Whom have we here? my old friend Frankly? Thou art grown a mere antique since I saw thee; how hast thou done these five hundred years?

Frank. Even as you see me; well, and at your service ever.

J. Meg. Ha! who's that?

Frank. A friend of mine. Mr Bellamy, this is Jack Meggot, Sir, as honest a fellow as any in life.

J. Meg. Pho! prithee! pox! Charles—Don't be silly.—Sir, I am your humble—Any one who is a friend of Mr Frankly's I am proud of embracing.

Bel. Sir, I shall endeavour to deserve your civility.

J. Meg. Oh, Sir!—Well, Charles! what? dumb? Come, come, you may talk though you have nothing to say, as I do—Let us hear, where have you been?

Frank. Why, for this last week, Jack, I have been at Bath.

J. Meg. Bath! the most ridiculous place in life!—amongst tradesmen's wives that hate their husbands, and people of quality that had rather go to the devil than stay at home. People of no taste—no *goust*—and for *divertimenti*, if it were not for the puppet-show, *la virtu* would be dead amongst them.—But the news, Charles—the ladies.—I fear your time hung heavy on your hands, by the small stay you made there.

Frank. Faith, and so it did, Jack. The ladies are grown such idiots in love—The cards have so debauched their five senses, that Love, almighty Love himself is utterly neglected.

J. Meg. It is the strangest thing in life, but it is just so with us abroad. Faith! Charles, to tell you a secret, which I don't care if all the world knows, I am almost surfeited with the services of the ladies, the modest ones, I mean. The vast variety of duties they expect—as dressing up to the fashion, losing fashionably, keeping fashionable hours, drinking fashionable liquors, and fifty other such irregular niceties, so ruin a man's

Act I.

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pocket and constitution, that foregad! he must have the estate of a duke, and the strength of a Gondolier, who would lift himself into their service!

Frank. A free confession truly, Jack, for one of your coat.

Bel. The ladies are obliged to you.

Enter BUCKLE with a letter to Bellamy.

J. Meg. Oh, Lard! Charles, I have had the greatest misfortune in life since I saw you—Poor Otho, that I brought from Rome with me, is dead.

Frank. Well, well; get you another, and all will be well again.

J. Meg. No! the rogue broke me so much China, and gnaw'd my Spanish leather shoes so filthily, that when he was dead I began not to endure him.

Bel. Exactly at seven! Run back and assure him I will not fail. [*Exit Buckle.*] Dead! Pray, who was the gentleman?

J. Meg. This gentleman was my monkey, Sir,—an odd sort of fellow, that used to divert me—and pleased every body so at Rome, that he always made one in our *conversations*.—But, Mr Bellamy, I saw a servant,—I hope no engagement; for you two positively shall dine with me. I have the finest macaroni in life, Oblige me so far.

Bel. Sir—your servant. What say you, Frankly?

J. Meg. Pho! pox! Charles, you shall go. My aunts think you begin to neglect them; and old maids, you know, are the most jealous creatures in life.

Frank. Ranger swears they can't be maids they are so good-natured! Well, I agree, on condition I may eat what I please, and go away just when I will.

J. Meg. Ay, ay; you shall do just what you will.—But how shall we do? my post-chaise won't carry us all.

Frank. My chariot is here, and I will conduct Mr Bellamy.

Bel. Mr Meggot—I beg pardon, I can't possibly

dine out of town; I have an engagement early in the evening.

J. Meg. Out of town! No, my dear, I live just by. I see one of the *dilettanti* I would not miss speaking to for the universe. And so I expect you at three. [*Exit.*]

Frank. Ha, ha, ha! and so you thought you had at least fifty miles to go post for a spoonful of macaroni.

Bel. I suppose then he is just come out of the country.

Frank. Nor that neither. I would venture a wager; from his own house hither, or to an auction or two of old dirty pictures, is the utmost of his travels to-day; or he may have been in pursuit, perhaps, of a new cargo of Venetian toothpicks.

Bel. A special acquaintance I have made to-day!

Frank. For all this, Bellamy, he has a heart worthy your friendship. He spends his estate freely, and you cannot oblige him more than by shewing him how he can be of service to you.

Bel. Now you say something. It is the heart, Frankly, I value in a man.

Frank. Right!—and there is a heart even in a woman's breast that is worth the purchase, or my judgment has deceived me. Dear Bellamy, I know your concern for me. See her first, and then blame me if you can.

Bel. So far from blaming you, Charles, that if my endeavours can be serviceable, I will beat the bushes with you.

Frank. That I'm afraid will not do; for you know less of her than I. But if in your walks you meet a finer woman than ordinary, let her not escape till I have seen her.——Wheresoever she is she cannot long be hid. [*Exeunt.*]

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ACT II. SCENE I.

St James's Park.

Enter CLARINDA, JACINTHA, and Mrs STRICKLAND.

JACINTHA.

AY, ay! we both stand condemned out of our own mouths.

Clar. Why—I cannot but own—I never had thought of any man that troubled me but of him.

Mrs Strick. Then I dare swear, by this time, you heartily repent your leaving Bath so soon.

Clar. Indeed you are mistaken; I have not had one scruple since.

Jac. Why, what one inducement can he have ever to think of you again?

Clar. Oh! the greatest of all inducements, curiosity. Let me assure you, a woman's surest hold over a man is to keep him in uncertainty. As soon as ever you put him out of doubt, you put him out of your power; but when once a woman has awak'd his curiosity, she may lead him a dance of many a troublesome mile without the least fear of losing him at last.

Jac. Now, I do heartily wish he may have spirit enough to follow, and use you as you deserve. Such a spirit, with but a little knowledge of our sex, might put that heart of yours into a strange flutter.

Clar. I care not how soon. I long to meet with such a fellow. Our modern beaux are such jointed babies in love they have no feeling. They are entirely insensible either of pain or pleasure, but from their own dear persons; and according as we flatter or affront their beauty, they admire or forsake ours. They are not worthy even of our displeasure; and, in short, abusing them is but so much ill nature merely thrown away. But the man of sense, who values himself upon his high abilities; or the man of wit, who thinks a woman beneath his conversation—to see such the subjects of our

power, the slaves of our frowns and smiles, is glorious indeed!

Mrs Strick. No man of sense, or wit either, if he be truly so, ever did, nor ever can think a woman of merit beneath his wisdom to converse with.

Jac. Nor will such a woman value herself upon making such a lover uneasy.

Old. Amazing! Why, every woman can give ease? You cannot be in earnest.

Mrs Strick. I can assure you she is, and has put in practice the doctrine she has been teaching.

Clar. Impossible! Who ever heard the name of love mentioned without an idea of torment? But pray let us hear.

Jac. Nay, there is nothing to hear that I know of.

Clar. So I suspected indeed. The novel is not likely to be long, when the lady is so well prepared for the denouement.

Jac. The novel, as you call it, is not so short as you may imagine. I and my spark have been long acquainted. As he was continually with my father, I soon perceived he lov'd me; and the manner of his expressing that love was what pleas'd and won me most.

Clar. Well, and how was it? the old bait? flattery? Dear flattery, I warrant ye.

Jac. No indeed—I had not the pleasure of hearing my person, wit, and beauty painted out with forced praises; but I had a more sensible delight in perceiving the drift of his whole behaviour was to make every hour of my time pass away agreeably.

Clar. The rustic! What, did he never say a handsome thing of your person?

Mrs Strick. He did, it seems, what pleased her better; he flattered her good sense, as much as a less cunning lover would have done her beauty.

Clar. On my conscience you are well match'd!

Jac. So well, that if my guardian denies me happiness, (and this evening he is to pass his final sentence), nothing is left but to break my prison, and fly into my lover's arms for safety.

Clar. Hey day! o' my conscience thou art a brave girl, Thou art the very first prude that ever had honesty enough to avow her passion for a man.

Jac. And thou art the first finish'd coquet who ever had any honesty at all.

Mrs Strick. Come, come! you are both too good for either of those characters.

Clar. And my dear Mrs Strickland here is the first young married woman of spirit, who has an ill-natur'd fellow for a husband, and never once thinks of using him as he deserves—Good Heaven! if I had such a husband——

Mrs Strick. You would be just as unhappy as I am.

Clar. But come now—confess—do not you long to be a widow?

Mrs Strick. Would I were any thing but what I am!

Clar. Then go the nearest way about it. I'd break that stout heart of his in less than a fortnight. I'd make him know——

Mrs Strick. Pray be silent. You know my resolution.

Clar. I know you have no resolution.

Mrs Strick. You are a mad creature, but I forgive you.

Clar. It is all meant kindly, I assure you. But since you won't be persuaded to your good, I will think of making you easy in your submission as soon as ever I can. I dare say I may have the same lodging I had last year. I can know immediately—I see my chair: and so Ladies both, adieu! [Exit Clarinda.

Jac. Come, Mrs Strickland, we shall but just have time to get home before Mr Bellamy comes.

Mrs Strick. Let us return then to our common prison. You must forgive my ill-nature, Jacintha, if I almost wish Mr Strickland may refuse to join your hand where your heart is given.

Jac. Lord! Madam, what do you mean?

Mrs Strick. Self-interest only, child! Methinks your company in the country would soften all my sorrows, and I could bear them patiently.

Clar. Frank! I have lost nothing—in—I'll follow you.
Re-enter CLARINDA.

Clar. Dear Mrs. Strickland—I am so confus'd, and so out of breath—

Mrs. Strick. Why, what is the matter?

Jac. I protest you fright me.

Clar. Oh! I have no time to recover myself, I am so frighten'd, and so pleas'd. In short then, the dear man is here.

Mrs. Strick. Here—Lord—Where?

Clar. I met him this instant: I saw him at a distance, turn'd short, and ran hither directly. Let us go home, I tell you, he follows me.

Mrs. Strick. Why, had you not better stay, and let him speak to you?

Clar. Ay!—But then—he won't know where I live, without my telling him.

Mrs. Strick. Come, then. Ha! ha! ha!

Jac. Ay! Poor Clarinda!—*Allons donc.* [Exit.

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. Sure that must be she! her shape and easy air cannot be so exactly copied by another. Now, you young rogue, Cupid, guide me directly to her, as you would the surest arrow in your quiver. [Exit.

S C E N E II.

Changes to the Street before Mr. Strickland's Door.

Re-enter CLARINDA, JACINTHA, and Mrs. STRICKLAND.

Clar. Lord—Dear Jacintha—for Heaven's sake make haste, he'll overtake us before we get in.

Jac. Overtake us? Why, he is not in sight.

Clar. Is not he? Ha! sure I have not dropt my wee—I would not have him lose sight of me neither.

Mrs. Strick. Here he is—

Clar. In—In—In then.

Jac. [Laughing.] What, without your twee?

Act II. The SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. 27

Clar. Pshaw! I have lost nothing—In—I'll follow you.

[Exeunt into the house; Clarinda last.]

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. It is impossible I should be deceiv'd: my eyes, and the quick pulses at my heart assure me it is she. Ha! 'tis she, by Heav'n! and the door left open too—A fair invitation, by all the rules of love. *[Exit.]*

S C E N E III.

Changes to an Apartment in Mr. Strictland's House.

Enter CLARINDA, FRANKLY following her.

Frank. I hope, Madam, you will excuse the boldness of this intrusion, since it is owing to your own behaviour that I am forc'd to it.

Clar. To my behaviour, Sir?

Frank. You cannot but remember me at Bath, Madam, where I so lately had the favour of your hand—

Clar. I do remember, Sir; but I little expected any wrong interpretation of my behaviour from one who had so much the appearance of a gentleman.

Frank. What I saw of your behaviour was so just, it would admit of no misrepresentation. I only fear'd, whatever reason you had to conceal your name from me at Bath; you might have the same to do it now; and tho' my happiness was so nearly concern'd, I rather chose to venture thus abruptly after you, than be impertinently inquisitive.

Clar. Sir, there seems to be so much civility in your rudeness, that I can easily forgive it; tho' I don't see how your happiness is at all concern'd.

Frank. No, Madam! I believe you are the only lady who could, with the qualifications you are mistress of, be insensible of the power they give you over the happiness of our sex.

Clar. How vain should we women be, if you gentlemen were but wise! if you did not all of you say the

THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

ACT II.

28. *Frank.* Some things to every woman, we should certainly be foolish enough to believe some of you were in earnest.

Frank. Could you have the least sense of what I feel while I am speaking, you would know me to be in earnest, and what I say to be the dictates of a heart that admires you, may I not say that—

Clar. Sir, this is carrying the—

Frank. When I danced with you at Bath, I was charm'd with your whole behaviour, and felt the same tender admiration; but my hope of seeing you afterwards kept in my passion 'till a more proper time should offer. You cannot therefore blame me now, if, after having lost you once, I do not suffer an inexcusable modesty to prevent my making use of this second opportunity.

Clar. This behaviour, Sir, is so different from the gaiety of your conversation then, that I am at a loss how to answer you.

Frank. There is nothing, Madam, which could take off from the gaiety with which your presence inspires every heart, but the fear of losing you. How can I be otherwise than as I am, when I know not but you may leave London as abruptly as you did Bath?

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Madam, the tea is ready, and my mistress waits for you.

Clar. Very well, I come—*[Exit Lucetta.]* You see, Sir, I am call'd away; but I hope you will excuse it, when I leave you with an assurance, that the business which brings me to town will keep me here some time.

Frank. How generous it is in you thus to save the heart that knew not how to ask for such a favour!—I fear to offend—But this house, I suppose, is yours.

Clar. You shall hear of me, if not find me here.

Frank. I then take my leave. *[Exit.]*

Clar. I'm undone!—He has me!

Enter Mrs STRICKLAND.

Mrs Strick. Well! how do you find yourself?

Act II. The SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

29

Clar. I do find—that if he goes on as he has begun, I shall certainly have him without giving him the least uneasiness.

Mrs. Strick. A very terrible prospect, indeed!

Clar. But I must seize him a little.—Where is Jacintha? how will she laugh at me, if I become a pupil of hers, and learn to give ease? no! positively I shall never do it.

Mrs. Strick. Poor Jacintha has meet with what I fear'd from Mr Strickland's temper—An utter denial. I know not why, but he really grows more and more in-natur'd.

Clar. Well, now do I heartily wish my affairs were in his power a little, that I might have a few difficulties to surmount.—I love difficulties: and yet I don't know—it is as well as it is.

Mrs. Strick. Ha, ha, ha! come, the tea waits.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Mr. STRICTLAND.

Strick. These doings in my house distract me! I met a fine gentleman—when I enquir'd who he was; why, he came to Clarinda. I met a footman too, and he came to Clarinda. I shall not be easy till she is de-camp'd. My wife had the character of a virtuous woman—and they have not been long acquainted. But then they were by themselves at Bath! that hurts—that hurts—they must be watch'd—they must—I know them, I know all their wiles, and the best of them are but hypocrites. Ha!—[*Lucetta passes over the stage.*] Suppose I bribe the maid—She is of their counsel—the manager of their secrets—It shall be so—money will do it, and I shall know all that passes. *Lucetta!*

Luc. Sir?

Strick. Lucetta!

Re-enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Sir? If he should suspect, and search me now, I'm undone. [Aside.]

Strick. She is a sly girl, and may be serviceable.

[*Aside.*] Lucetta, you are a good girl, and have an honest face. I like it. It looks as if it carried no deceit in it—Yet if she should be false, she can do me most harm.

Doc. Pray, Sir, speak out.

Sir. [*Aside.*] No! she is a woman, and it is the highest imprudence to trust her.

Luc. I am not able to understand you.

Sir. I am glad of it. I would not have you understand me.

Luc. Then what did you call me for? If he should be in love with my face, it would be rare sport. [*Aside.*

Sir. [*Aside.*] Tester, ay, Tester is the proper person—Lucetta, tell Tester I want him.

Luc. Yes, Sir.—[*Aside.*] Mighty odd, this! it gives me time however to send Buckle with this letter to his master.

Sir. Could I but be once well satisfied that my wife had really finish'd me, I believe I should be as quiet as if I were sure of the contrary.—But whilst I am in doubt, I am miserable.

Enter TESTER.

Test. Does your Honour please to want me?

Sir. Ay, Tester.—I need not fear. The honesty of his service, and the goodness of his look make me secure. I will trust him. [*Aside.*]—Tester, I think I have been a tolerable good master to you.

Test. Yes, Sir—very tolerable.

Sir. [*Aside.*] I like his simplicity well. It promises honesty—I have a secret, Tester, to impart to you—A thing of the greatest importance. Look upon me, and don't stand picking your fingers.

Test. Yes, Sir—No, Sir.

Sir. But will not his simplicity expose him the more to Lucetta's cunning? Yes, yes! she will worm the secret out of him. I had better trust her with it at once.

—So—T will. [*Aside.*] Tester, go, send Lucetta hither.

Test. Yes, Sir—Here she is.

Re-enter LUCETTA. [Lucetta] I have been thinking of you, Sir, ever since I saw you last.

Lucetta, my master wants you.

Sirri. Get you down, Tester.

Test. Yes, Sir. [Exit Tester.]

Luc. If you want me, Sir, I beg you would make haste, for I have a thousand things to do.

Sirri. Well, well! what I have to say will not take up much time, could I but persuade you to be honest.

Luc. Why, Sir, I hope you don't suspect my honesty?

Sirri. Well, well! I believe you honest.

[Shuts the door.]

Luc. What can be at the bottom of all this? [Aside.]

Sirri. So! we cannot be too private. Come hither, huffy; nearer yet.

Luc. Laud, Sir! you are not going to be rude? I vow, I will call out.

Sirri. Hold your tongue. Does the baggage laugh at me? [Aside.] She does—she mocks me, and will reveal it to my wife! and her insolence upon it will be more insupportable to me than cuckoldom itself. I have not leisure now, Lucetta—some other time—Hush! did not the bell ring? Yes, yes: my wife wants you. Go, go, go to her. [Pushes her out.] There is no hell on earth like being a slave to suspicion. [Exit.]

S C E N E IV.

The Piazza, Covent-Garden.

Enter BELLAMY and JACK MEGGOT.

Bell. Nay, nay, I would not put your family into any confusion.

J. Meg. None in life, my dear, I assure you. I will go and order every thing this instant for her reception.

Bell. You are too obliging, Sir; but you need not be in this hurry, for I am in no certainty when I shall trouble you. I only know that my Jacintha has taken such a resolution.

Test. Yes, Sir—Here she is.

J. Meg. Therefore we should be prepar'd; for when once a lady has had such a resolution in her head, she is upon the rack till she executes it. For Gad! Mr Bellamy, this must be a girl of fire.

Enter FRANK.

Frank. Buxom and lively as the bounding does, — Fair as painting can express, or youthful poets fancy when they love. *Tot de rol, lol!*

[Singing and dancing.]

Bel. Who is this you talk thus rapturously of?

Frank. Who should it be, but — I shall know her name to-morrow. *[Sings and dances.]*

J. Meg. What is the matter, ho! Is the man mad?

Frank. Even so, Gentlemen, as mad as love and joy can make me.

Bel. But inform us whence this joy proceeds.

Frank. Joy, joy, my lads! She's found! my Perdita! my charmer!

J. Meg. Egad! her charms have bewitch'd the man I think — But who is she?

Bel. Come, come, tell us who is this wonder?

Frank. But will you say nothing?

Bel. Nothing, as I live.

Frank. Nor you?

J. Meg. I'll be silent as the grave —

Frank. With a tombstone upon it, to tell every one whose dust it carries?

J. Meg. I'll be as secret as a debauch'd prude —

Frank. Whole sanctity every one suspects. Jack, Jack, 'tis not in thy nature. Keeping a secret is worse to thee than keeping thy accounts. But to leave fooling, listen to me both, that I may whisper it into your ears, that Echo may not catch the sinking sound — I cannot tell who she is, faith — *Tot de rol, lol!*

J. Meg. Mad, mad! very mad!

Frank. All I know of her is, that she is a charming woman, and has given me liberty to visit her again. — Bellamy, 'tis she, the lovely she!

Act II. THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. 33

Bel. So I did suppose.

[To Frankly.]

F. Mag. Poor Charles! For Heaven's sake, Mr. Bellamy, persuade him home to his chamber—whilst I prepare every thing for you at home. Adieu.—*[Exit F. Mag.]*
to Bel.] B'ye Charles; ha, ha, ha.

Frank. Oh, Love! thou art a gift worthy of a God indeed! Dear Bellamy, nothing now could add to my pleasure but to see my friend as deep in love as I am.

Bel. I shew my heart is capable of love, by the friendship it bears to you.

Frank. The light of friendship looks but dim before the brighter flame of love. Love is the spring of cheerfulness and joy. Why, how dull and phlegmatic do you shew to me now? whilst I am all life; light as feather'd Mercury.—You dull and cold as earth and water; I light and warm as air and fire.—These are the only elements in Love's world! Why, Bellamy, for shame! get thee a mistress, and be sociable.

Bel. Frankly, I am now going to—

Frank. Why that face now? Your humble servant, Sir: my blood of joy shall not be stopp'd by your melancholy fits, I assure you. *[Going.]*

Bel. Stay, Frankly, I beg you stay. What would you say now, if I really were in love?

Frank. Why, faith, thou hast such romantic notions of sense and honour, that I know not what to say.

Bel. To confess the truth then, I am in love.

Frank. And do you confess it as if it were a sin. Proclaim it aloud. Glory in it. Boast of it as your greatest virtue. Swear it with a lover's oath, and I will believe you.

Bel. Why then, by the bright eyes of her I love—

Frank. Well said!

Bel. By all that's tender, amiable, and soft in woman—

Frank. Bravo!

Bel. I swear, I am as true an enamour'd as ever tagg'd rhyme.

Frank. And art thou then thoroughly in love? Come to my arms, thou dear companion of my joys.

[They embrace.]

Enter RANGER.

Ran. Why—hey!—is there never a wench to be got for love or money?

Bel. Pshaw! Ranger here!

Ran. Yes, Ranger is here, and perhaps does not come so impertinently as you may imagine. Faith, I think I have the knack of finding out secrets. Nay, never look so queer—Here is a letter, Mr Bellamy, that seems to promise you better diversion than your hugging one another.

Bel. What do you mean?

Ran. Do you deal much in these paper tokens?

Bel. Oh, the dear kind creature! it is from herself.

[To Frankly.]

Ran. What, is it a pair of lac'd shoes she wants? Or have the boys broke her windows?

Bel. Hold your profane tongue.

Frank. Nay, prithee, Bellamy, don't keep it to yourself, as if her whole affections were contain'd in those few lines.

Ran. Prithee, let him alone to his silent raptures. But it is, as I always said—Your grave men ever are the greatest whoremasters.

Bel. I cannot be disobligh'd now, say what you will. But how came this into your hands?

Ran. Your servant Buckle and I chang'd commissions. He went on my errand, and I came on his.

Bel. Sdeath! I want him this very instant.

Ran. He will be here presently; but I demand to know what I have brought you?

Frank. Ay, ay! out with it! You know we never blab, and may be of service.

Bel. Twelve o'clock! oh, the dear hour!

Ran. Why, it is a pretty convenient time, indeed.

Bel. By all that's happy, she promises in this letter

to yourself neither; for if this should prove a round-

I believe I will make no doubt it will I believe

THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. 33
 ACT II. The SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

here—to leave her guardian this very night—and run away with me.

Ran. How is this?

Bel. Nay, I know not how myself—she says at the bottom—“Your servant has full instructions from Lucetta, how to equip me for my expedition.—I will not trust myself home with you to-night, because I know it is inconvenient; therefore I beg you would procure me a lodging, it is no matter how far off my guardian’s.—Your’s, JACINTHA.”

Ran. Carry her to a bagnio, and there you may lodge with her.

Frank. Why, this must be a girl of spirit, faith!

Bel. And beauty equal to her sprightliness. I love her, and she loves me—She has thirty thousand to her fortune.

Ran. The devil she has!

Bel. And never plays at cards.

Ran. Nor does any one thing like any other woman, I suppose.

Frank. Nor so, I hope, neither.

Bel. Oh, Frankly, Ranger! I never felt such ease before: the secret’s out, and you don’t laugh at me.

Frank. Laugh at thee—for loving a woman of thirty thousand pound! Thou art a most unaccountable fellow.

Ran. How the devil could he work her up to this? I never could have had the face to have done it. But—I knew not how—there is a degree of assurance in you modest gentlemen, which we impudent fellows never can come up to.

Bel. Oh, your servant, good Sir! You should not abuse me now, Ranger, but do all you can to assist me.

Ran. Why, look ye, Bellamy, I am a damnable unlucky fellow—and so will have nothing to do in this affair. I’ll take care to be out of the way, so as to do you no harm. That is all I can answer for: and so—success attend you. [Going.] I cannot leave you quite to yourself neither; for if this should prove a round-house affair, as I make no doubt it will, I believe I

may have more interest there than you; and so, Sir, you may hear of me at ——— [Whisper.]

Bel. For shame, Ranger! the most noted gaming-house in town.

Ran. Forgive me this once, my boy! I must go, faith, to pay a debt of honour to some of the greatest rascals in town. [Exit.]

Frank. But where do you design to lodge her?

Bel. At Mr Meggot's — He is already gone to prepare for her reception.

Frank. The properest place in the world. His aunts will entertain her with honour.

Bel. And the newness of her acquaintance will prevent its being suspected. — Frankly, give me your hand. This is a very critical time. —

Frank. Pho! none of your musty reflections now. When a man is in love to the very brink of matrimony, what the devil has he to do with Plutarch and Seneca? Here's your servant with a face full of business — I'll leave you together — I shall be at the King's Arms, where, if you want my assistance, you may find me. [Exit.]

Enter BUCKLE.

Bel. So — Buckle — you seem to have your hands full.

Buck. Not fuller than my head, Sir, I promise you. You have had your letter, I hope?

Bel. Yes, and in it she refers me to you for my instruction.

Buck. Why, the affair stands thus: — As Mr Strickland sees the door lock'd and barr'd every night himself, and takes the key up with him, it is impossible for us to escape any way but through the window; for which purpose I have a ladder of ropes.

Bel. Good —

Buck. And because a hoop, as the ladies wear them now, is not the most decent dress to come down a ladder in — I have in this other bundle a suit of boy's

Act II.
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ACT III. THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. 37

cloaths, which I believe will fit her. At least, it will serve the time she will want it.—You will soon be for pulling it off. I suppose—

Bell. Why, you are in spirits, you rogue.

Buck. These I am now to convey to Lucetta—
Have you any thing to say, Sir?

Bell. Nothing, but that I will not fail at the hour appointed.—Bring me word to Mr Meggot's how you go on. Succeed in this, and it shall make your fortune.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

The Street before Mr Strickland's house.

Enter BELLAMY in a Chairman's coat.

BELLAMY.

HOW tediously have the minutes past these last few hours! and the envious rogues will fly, no lightning quicker, when we would have them stay.—Hold, let me not mistake—This is the house. [*Pulls out his watch.*] By Heaven, it is not yet the hour!—I hear somebody coming. The moon's so bright—I had better not be here, 'till the happy instant comes.
[*Exit.*]

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. Wine is no antidote to love, but rather feeds the flame. Now am I such an amorous puppy, that I cannot walk straight home, but must come out of my way to take a view of my queen's palace by moon-light—Ay, here stands the temple where my goddess is adored! The door opens! [*Retires.*]

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. under the window. Madam, Madam, hiss! Madam!—How shall I make her hear?

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JACINTHA is by her cloaths at the window.

Yac. Who is there? what's the matter?

Luc. It is I, Madam: you must not pretend to stir till I give the word.—You'll be discover'd if you do—

Frank. *aside.*] What do I see! a man! My heart misgives me.

Luc. My master is below sitting up for Mrs Clarinda. He raves as if he were mad about her being out so late.

Frank. *aside.*] Here is some intrigue, or other. I must see more of this, before I give further way to love.

Luc. One minute he is in the street—the next he is in the kitchen; now he will lock her out, and then he'll wait himself, and see what figure she makes when she vouchsafes to venture home.

Yac. I long to have it over. Get me but once out of this house.

Frank. *aside.*] Cowardly rascal! Would I were in his place!

Luc. If I can but fix him anywhere, I can let you out myself.—You have the ladder ready in case of necessity?

Yac. Yes, yes. [Exit Luc.]

Frank. *aside.*] The ladder! This must lead to some discovery. I shall watch you, my young gentleman; I shall.

Enter CLARINDA, and Servant.

Clar. This whistle is a most enticing devil. I am afraid I am too late for Mr Strickland's sober hours.

Yac. Ha! I hear a noise.

Clar. No, I see a light in Jacintha's window. You may go home. [Giving the Servant money.] I am safe.

Yac. Sure it must be he, Mr Bellamy. Sir!

Frank. *aside.*] Does he not call to me?

Clar. *aside.*] Ha! who's that? I am frighted out of my wits. A man!—

Yac. Is it you?

Frank. Yes, yes! 'tis I.

Jac. Listen at the door.

Frank. I will—tis open—There is no noise—All's quiet.

Clar. Sure it is my spark—and talking to Jacintha.

Frank. You may come down the ladder—quick.

Jac. Catch it then, and hold it.

Frank. I have it. Now I shall see what sort of mettle my young spark is made of.

Clar. With a ladder too. I'll assure you! But I must see the end of it.

Jac. Hark! did not somebody speak?

Frank. No, no; be not fearful—Sdeath! we are discover'd.

[*Frank. and Clar. retire.*]

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Hift, hift! Are you ready?

Jac. Yes. May I venture?

Luc. Now is your time. He is in high conference with his privy counsellor Mr Tester. You may come down the back stairs, and I'll let you out.

Jac. I will, I will, and am heartily glad of it.

[*Exit Jacintha.*]

Frank. advancing.] May be so—But you and I shall have a few words before you get off so cleanly.

Clar. advancing.] How lucky it was I came home at this instant. I shall spoil his sport, I believe. Do you know me, Sir?

Frank. I am amaz'd! You here! This was unexpected indeed.

Clar. But I shall amaze you more—I know the whole course of your amour; all the process of your mighty passion from its first rise—

Frank. What is all this?

Clar. To the very conclusion, which you vainly hope to effect this night.

Frank. By Heaven, Madam, I know not what you mean. I came hither purely to contemplate on your beauties.

Clara. Any beauties, Sir, *Frank.* will serve your turn.
Did I not hear you talk to her at the window?

Frank. Her!

Clara. Blush, blush for shame; but be assured you have seen the last, both of Jacintha and me. *[Exit.]*

Frank. Jacintha! Hear me, Madam. — She is gone. This must certainly be Bellamy's mistress, and I have fairly ruin'd all his scheme. This it is to be in luck,

Enter BELLAMY behind.

Bel. Hark! a man under the window!

Frank. No, here she comes, and I may convey her to him.

Enter JACINTHA, and runs to Frankly.

Jac. I have at last got to you; let's haste away! Oh!

Frank. Be not frighten'd, Lady.

Jac. Oh, I'm abus'd, betray'd!

Bel. Betray'd! Frankly!

Frank. Bellamy!

Bel. I can scarce believe it, though I see it.

Draw.

Frank. Hear me, Bellamy. — Lady.

Jac. Stay — do not fight.

Frank. I am innocent; it is all a mistake.

Jac. For my sake, be quiet. — We shall be discover'd. The family is alarm'd.

Bel. You are obey'd. — Mr Frankly, there is but one way —

Frank. I understand you. Any time but now. You will certainly be discover'd. To-morrow — at your chambers —

Bel. 'Till then, farewell! *[Exit Bellamy and Jac.]*

Frank. Then, when he is cool, I may be heard; and the real, though suspicious account of this matter may be believ'd. Yet amidst all this perplexity, it pleases me to find my fair *Incognita* is jealous of my love.

Strife within. Where's Lucetta? Search every place.

Frank. Hark! the cry is up — I must be gone.

[Exit Frank.]

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Enter Mr STRICKLAND, TESTER, and SERVANTS.

Strick. She's gone! She's lost! I am cheated! Pursue her! seek her!

Test. Sir, all her clothes are in her chamber.

Serv. Sir, Mrs Clarinda said she was in boy's clothes.

Strick. Ay, ay, I know it—Bellamy has her—come along—pursue her. *[Exit.]*

Enter RANGER.

Ran. Hark;—Was not the noise this way?—No—there is no game stirring. This same Goddess, Diana, shines so bright with her chastity, that egad I believe the wenches are ashamed to look her in the face. Now I am in an admirable mood for a frolic! have wine in my head, and money in my pocket, and so am furnish'd out for the cannonading any countess in Christendom! Ha, what have we here? A ladder? this cannot be placed here for nothing—and a window open—Is it love or mischief now, that is going on within?—I care not which; I am in a right cue for either—Up I go—Stay—Do not I run a greater chance of spoiling sport than I do of making any? that I hate, as much as I love the other—there can be no harm in seeing how the land lies—I'll up. *[Goes up softly.]*—All is hush—Ha, a light, and a woman, by all that's lucky, neither old nor crooked!—I'll in—Ha, she's gone again! I will after her. *[Gets in at the window.]* And for fear of the squalls of virtue, and the pursuit of the family, I will make sure of the ladder. Now Fortune, be my guide. *[Exit with the ladder.]*

SCENE II.

Mrs Strickland's Dressing-room.

Enter Mrs STRICKLAND, followed by LUCETTA.

Mrs Strick. Well, I am in great hopes she will escape.

Luc. Never fear, Madam. The lovers have the start of him, and I warrant they keep it.

Mrs. Strick. Were Mr Strickland ever to suspect my being privy to her flight, I know not what might be the consequences.

Luc. Then you had better be undressing—He may return immediately.

As she is sitting down to the toilet, RANGER enters behind.

Ran. Young and beautiful— [*Aside.*

Luc. I have watch'd him pretty narrowly of late, and never once suspected till this morning—

Mrs. Strick. And who gave you authority to watch his actions, or pry into his secrets?

Luc. I hope, Madam, you are not angry. I thought it might have been of service to you to know my master was jealous.

Ran. And her husband jealous! If she does but send away the maid, I am happy.

Mrs. Strick. angrily.] Leave me.

Luc. This it is to meddle with other people's affairs. [*Exit in anger.*

Ran. What a lucky dog I am! I never made a gentleman a cuckold before. Now, impudence.

Mrs. Strick. rising.] Provoking! I am sure I never have deserv'd it of him.

Ran. Oh, cuckold him by all means, Madam; I am your man! [*She shrieks.*] Oh fy, Madam! if you squall so cursedly, you will be discover'd.

Mrs. Strick. Discover'd! What mean you, Sir? Do you come to abuse me?

Ran. I'll do my endeavour, Madam: you can have no more.

Mrs. Strick. Whence came you? how came you here?

Ran. Dear Madam, so long as I am here, what signifies how I got here, or whence I came? But that I may satisfy your curiosity: First, as to your Whence came you? I answer, out of the street: and to your How got you here? I say, in at the window. It stood so invitingly open, it was irresistible. But, Madam—

you were going to undress. I beg I may not inconvenience you.

Mrs. Strick. This is the most consummate piece of impudence.

Ran. For Heaven's sake, have one drop of pity for a poor young fellow, who long has lov'd you.

Mrs. Strick. What would the fellow have?

Ran. Your husband's usage will excuse you to the world.

Mrs. Strick. I cannot bear this insolence. Help, help!

Ran. Oh! hold that clamorous tongue. Madam, speak one word more, and I am gone, positively gone.

Mrs. Strick. Gone! so I would have you.

Ran. Lord, Madam, you are so hasty.

Mrs. Strick. Shall I not speak, when a thief, a robber, breaks into my house at midnight? Help, help!

Ran. Ha, no one hears. Now, Cupid, assist me! Look ye, Madam, I never could make fine speeches, and cringe, and bow, and fawn, and flatter, and lie. I have said more to you already, than I ever said to a woman in such circumstances in all my life. But since I find ye will yield to no persuasion to your good—I will gently force you to be grateful. [Throws down his hat, and seizes her.] Come, come, unbend the brow, and look more kindly on me.

Mrs. Strick. For shame, Sir—Thus on my knees let me beg for mercy. [Kneeling.]

Ran. And thus, on mine, let me beg the same. [He kneels, catches, and kisses her.]

Strick. within.] Take away her sword! she'll hurt herself.

Mrs. Strick. Oh, heavens! that is my husband's voice.

Ran. rising.] The devil it is!

Strick. within.] Take away her sword, I say, and then I can close with her.

Mrs. Strick. He is upon the stairs now coming up. I am undone if he sees you.

Ran. Pox on him, I must decamp then. Which way?

Mrs. Strick. Through this passage into the next chamber.

Ran. And so into the street. With all my heart, You may be perfectly easy, Madam. Men's the word. I never blab. — [*Aside.*] I shall not leave off so, but wait till the last moment. — [*Exit Rang.*]

Mrs Strick. So he is gone! What could I have said, if he had been discovered?

Enter Mr STRICTLAND driving in JACINTHA, LUCETTA following.

Strick. Once more, my pretty masculine Madam, you are welcome home; and I hope to keep you somewhat closer than I have done; for to-morrow morning at eight o'clock is the latest hour you shall stay in this lewd town.

Jac. Oh, Sir, when once a girl is equipped with a hearty resolution, it is not your Worship's sagacity, nor the great chain at your gate, can hinder her from doing what she has a mind.

Strick. Oh, Lord, Lord! how this love improves a young lady's modesty!

Jac. Am I to blame to seek for happiness any where, when you are resolv'd to make me miserable here?

Strick. I have this night prevented your making yourself so, and will endeavour to do it for the future. I have you safe now, and the devil shall not get you out of my clutches again. I have lock'd the doors and barr'd them, I warrant you. So here — [*Giving her a candle.*] Troop to your chamber, and to bed, whilst you are well. Go — [*He trends on Ranger's hat.*] What's here? A hat! a man's hat in my wife's dressing-room!

[Looking at the hat.] *Mrs Strick. aside.* What shall I do?

Strick. taking up the hat, and looking at Mrs. Strickland.] Ha! by hell, I see 'tis true.

Mrs Strick. My fears confound me. I dare not tell the truth, and know not how to frame a lie. [*Aside.*]

Strick. Mrs Strickland, Mrs Strickland! how came this hat into your chamber?

Luc. aside.] Are you that way disposed, my fine Lady, and will not trust me?

THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND
 ACT III. THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

Strick. Speak, wretch! speak! —

Jac. I could not have suspected this. — *[Aside.]*

Strick. Why dost thou not speak?

Mrs. Strick. Sir, —

Strick. Guilt — 'tis guilt that yees your tongue.

Luc. I must bring her off, however. — No chambermaid can help it. — *[Aside.]*

Strick. My fears are just, and I am miserable — Thou worst of women!

Mrs. Strick. I know you are false — and 'tis I who will bear my injuries no longer. — *[Both walk about in a passion.]*

Luc. to Jacintha aside. Is not the hat yours? Own it, Madam. *[Takes away Jacintha's hat, and exits.]*

Mrs. Strick. What ground, what cause have you for jealousy? when you yourself can witness your leaving me was accidental, your return uncertain, and expected even sooner than it happened! The abuse is gross and palpable.

Strick. Why, this is true.

Mrs. Strick. Indeed, Jacintha, I am innocent.

Strick. And yet this hat must belong to somebody.

Jac. Dear Mrs. Strickland, be not concern'd. — When he has diverted himself a little longer with it —

Mrs. Strick. Ha! —

Jac. I suppose he will give me my hat again.

Strick. Your hat!

Jac. Yes, my hat. You brush'd it from my side yourself, and then trod upon it; whether on purpose to abuse this lady or no, you best know yourself.

Strick. It cannot be — It's all a lie.

Jac. Believe so still — with all my heart — But the hat is mine. *[Snatches it, puts it on.]*

Strick. Why did she look so?

Jac. Your violence of temper is too much for her. You use her ill, and then suspect her for that confusion which you yourself occasion.

Strick. Why did not you let me right at first?

Jac. Your hard usage of me, Sir, is a sufficient reason.

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why I should not be much concern'd to undeceive you at all. 'Tis for your lady's sake I do it now, who deserves much better of you than to be thus expos'd for every slight suspicion. See where she sits—Go to her.

Mrs Strick. rising.] Indeed, Mr Strickland, I have a soul as much above—

Strick. Whew! now you have both found your tongues, and I must bear their eternal rattle.

Jac. For shame, Sir. Go to her, and—

Strick. Well, well, what shall I say? I forgive—all is over. I, I, I forgive—

Mrs Strick. Forgive! what do you mean?

Jac. Forgive her! is that all? Consider, Sir—

Strick. Hold—hold your confounded tongues, and I'll do any thing. I'll ask pardon—or forgive, or any thing.

Good now, be quiet—I ask your pardon—there—

[Kisses her.] For you, Madam,—I'm infinitely obliged to you, and I cou'd find in my heart to make you a return in kind, by marrying you to a beggar—but I have more conscience. Come, come, to your chamber.

Here, take this candle—

Enter LUCETTA, partly.

Luc. Sir, if you please, I will light my young lady to bed.

Strick. No, no; no such thing, good Madam. She shall have nothing but her pillow to console this night.

I assure you—So, in, in. *[The ladies take leave. Exit*

Jacintha.] Good night, kind Madam.

Luc. Pox of the jealous fool! we might both have escaped out of the window purely.

Strick. Go, get you down; and, do you hear? order the coach to be ready in the morning at eight exactly.

[Exit Lucetta.] So she is safe till to-morrow, and then for the country, and when she is there I can manage as

I think fit.

Mrs Strick. Dear Mr Strickland,

Mrs Strick. I am not in a humour, Mrs Strickland, sit to talk with you—Go to bed—I will endeavour to get

the better of my temper, if I can— I'll follow you.
[Exit Mrs Strickland.] How despicable have I made
 myself!

SCENE III.

Another Chamber.

Enter RANGER.

Ran. All seems hush'd again, and I may venture out.
 I may as well sneak off whilst I am in a whole skin.
 And shall so much love and claret as I am in possession
 of only lull me to sleep, when it might so much better
 keep me waking? Forbid it, Fortune, and forbid it,
 Love. This is a chamber, perhaps, of some bewitching
 female, and I may yet be happy. Ha! a light! the
 door opens. A boy! Pox on him! *[He retires.]*

Enter JACINTHA with a candle.

Jac. I have been listening at the door; and from
 their silence I conclude they are peaceably gone to bed
 together.

Ran. aside.] A pretty boy, faith! he seems uneasy.

Jac. sitting down.] What an unlucky night has this
 proved to me! Every circumstance has fallen out un-
 happily.

Ran. He talks aloud. I'll listen.

Jac. But what most amazes me is, that Clarinda
 should betray me!

Ran. Clarinda! she must be a woman. Well, what
 of her? *[Aside.]*

Jac. My guardian else would never have suspected
 my disguise.

Ran. aside.] Disguise! Had it must be so. What
 eyes she has! What a dull rogue was I not to suspect
 this sooner!

Jac. Ha! I had forgot—the ladder is at the window
 still, and I will boldly venture myself *[Rings briskly.]*
[Enter Ranger.] Ha! a man, and well dress'd! Ha! Mrs
 Strickland, are you then at last dishonest?

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Ran. aside. By all my wishes she is a charming woman! Luckyascal! no more of this.

Jac. But I will, if possible, conceal her shame, and stand the brunt of his impertinence.

Ran. What shall I say to her? No matter; any thing soft will do the business; but *one of mine* *[Aside.*

Jac. Who are you?

Ran. A man, young Gentleman.

Jac. And what would you have?

Ran. A woman.

Jac. You are very free, Sir. Here are none for you.

Ran. Ay, but there is one, and a fair one too; the most charming creature Nature ever set her hand to; and you are the dear little pilot that must direct me to her heart.

Jac. What mean you, Sir? It is an office I am not accustomed to.

Ran. You won't have far to go, however. I never make my errands tedious. It is to your own heart, dear Madam, I would have you whisper in my behalf. Nay, never start. Think you such beauty could ever be conceal'd from eyes so well acquainted with its charms?

Jac. What will become of me! If I cry out, Mrs Strickland is undone. This is my last resort. *[Aside.*

Ran. Pardon, dear Lady, the boldness of this visit, which your guardian's care has forc'd me to—But I long have lov'd you, long doated on that beauteous face, and followed you from place to place, tho', perhaps, unknown and unregarded.

Jac. Here's a special fellow! *[Aside.*

Ran. Turn then an eye of pity on my sufferings; and by Heaven—one tender look from those piercing eyes—one touch of this soft hand— *[Going to take her hand.*

Jac. Hold, Sir—no nearer.

Ran. Would more than repay whole years of pain.

Jac. Hear me. But keep your distance, or I raise the family—

Ran. Blessings on her tongue, only for prating to me.

Jac. Oh, for a moment's courage, and I shall shame *[Aside.*

Jac. Oh, for a moment's courage, and I shall shame

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him from his purpose. [*Aside.*] If I were certain so much gallantry had been shown on my account only——

Ran. You wrong your beauty to think that any other could have power to draw me hither. By all the little loves that play about your lips, I swear——

Jac. You came to me, and me alone!

Ran. By all the thousand graces that inhabit there, you, and only you, have drawn me hither.

Jac. Well said.

Ran. By Heaven she comes! ah, honest Ranger, I never knew thee fail!——

Jac. Pray, Sir, where did you leave this hat?

Ran. That hat!—That hat—It's my hat—I dropt it in the next chamber as I was looking for yours.

Jac. How mean and despicable do you look now!

Ran. So, so! I am in a pretty pickle!

Jac. You know by this, that I am acquainted with every thing that has passed within; and how ill it agrees with what you have professed to me——Let me advise you, Sir, to be gone immediately. Thro' that window you may easily get into the street—One scream of mine, the least noise at that door will wake the house.

Ran. Say you so? [*Aside.*]

Jac. Believe me, Sir, an injur'd husband is not so easily appear'd, and a suspected wife that is jealous of her honour——

Ran. Is the devil, and so let's have no more of her. Look ye, Madam, [*Getting between the door and her.*] I have but one argument left, and that is a strong one: look on me well, I am as handsome, a strong, well-made fellow, as any about town; and since we are alone as I take it, we can have no occasion to be more private.

[*Going to lay hold of her.*]

Jac. I have a reputation, Sir, and will maintain it.

Ran. You have a bewitching pair of eyes.

Jac. Consider my virtue. [*Struggling.*]

Ran. Consider your beauty and my desires.

Jac. If I were a man, you dar'd not use me thus.

Ran. I should not have the same temptation.

Jac. Hear me, Sir, I will be heard. [*breaks from him.*]

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There is a man who will make you repent this usage of me.—Oh! Bellamy, where art thou now?

Ran. Bellamy?

Jac. Were he here, you durst not thus affront me.

[Barb'ling out a crying.]

Ran. His Mistress, on my soul! [Aside.] You can love, Madam; you can love, I find. Her tears affect me strangely. [Aside.]

Jac. I am not ashamed to own my passion for a man of virtue and honour.—I love, and glory in it.

Ran. Oh! brave! and you can write letters, you can. I will not trust myself home with you this evening, because I know it is inconvenient.

Jac. Ha!

Ran. Therefore I beg you would procure me a lodging; it's no matter how far off my guardian's. Yours, Jacintha.

Jac. The very words of my letter; I am amaz'd. Do you know Mr Bellamy?

Ran. There is not a man on earth I have so great a value for: and he must have some value for me too, or he would never have shewn me your pretty epistle. Think of that, fair Lady. The ladder is at the window. And so, Madam, I hope delivering you safe into his arms will, in some measure, expiate the crime I have been guilty of to you.

Jac. Good Heav'n, how fortunate is this!

Ran. I believe I make myself appear more wicked than I really am. For, damn me, if I do not feel more satisfaction in the thoughts of restoring you to my friend, than I could have pleasure in any favour your bounty could have bestow'd.

Jac. Your generosity transports me.

Ran. Let us lose no time then, the ladder's ready.—Where was you to lodge?

Jac. At Mr Meggot's.

Ran. At my friend Jacky's? better and better still.

Jac. Are you acquainted with him too?

Ran. Ay, ay! why, did I not tell you at first that he was one of your old acquaintance? I know all about

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you, you see; tho' the devil fetch me if ever I saw you before. Now, Madam—

Fac. And now, Sir.—Have with you.

Ran. Then thou art a girl of spirit. And tho' I long to hug you for trusting yourself with me, I will not beg a single kiss, till Bellamy himself shall give me leave. He must fight well that takes you from me. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The Piazza.

Enter BELLAMY and FRANKLY.

BELLAMY.

PSHA! what impertinent devil put it into your head to meddle with my affairs?

Frank. You know I went thither in pursuit of another.

Bel. I know nothing you had to do there at all.

Frank. I thought, Mr Bellamy, you were a lover.

Bel. I am so; and therefore should be forgiven this sudden warmth.

Frank. And therefore should forgive the fond impertinence of a lover.

Bel. Jealousy, you know, is as natural an incident to Love—

Frank. As curiosity. By one piece of silly curiosity I have gone nigh to ruin both myself and you. Let not then your jealousy compleat our misfortunes. I fear I have lost a mistress as well as you. Then let us not quarrel. All may come right again.

Bel. It is impossible. She is gone, remov'd for ever from my sight. She is in the country by this time.

Frank. How did you lose her after we parted?

Bel. By too great confidence. When I got her to my chair, the chairmen were not to be found—And safe as I thought in our disguise, I actually put her into the chair, when Mr Strickland and his servants were in

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fight; which I had no sooner done, than they surround-
ed us, overpowered me, and carry'd her away.

[*Frank.* Unfortunate indeed! Could you not make a
second attempt?

[*Bel.* I had design'd it. But when I came to the door,
I found the ladder remov'd, and hearing no noise,
seeing no lights, nor being able to make any body an-
swer, I concluded all attempts as impracticable as now
I find them. Ha! I see Lucetta coming. Then they
may be still in town.

Enter LUCETTA.

Lucetta, welcome! What news of Jacintha?

Luc. News, Sir! You fright me out of my senses!
Why, is she not with you?

Bel. What do you mean? With me? I have not seen
her since I lost her last night.

Luc. Good Heav'n! then she is undone for ever.

Frank. Why, what's the matter?

Bel. Speak out—I'm all amazement.

Luc. She is escap'd without any of us knowing how.
No body miss'd her till morning. We all thought she
went away with you. But Heaven knows now what
may have happen'd!

Bel. Somebody must have accompanied her in her
flight.

Luc. We know of nobody. We are all in confusion
at home. My master swears revenge on you. My mi-
stress says a stranger has her.

Bel. A stranger!

Luc. But Mrs Clarinda—

Bel. Clarinda! Who is she?

Luc. to Frank.] The Lady, Sir, you saw at our house
last night.

Frank. Ha! what of her?

Luc. She says, she is sure one Frankly is the man.
She saw them together, and knows it to be true.

Frank. Damn'd fortune!

Luc. Sure this is not Mr Frankly.

[*Aside.*

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Frank. Nothing will convince him now. *[Aside.]*

Bel. *looking at Frank.* Ha! his truth!—I see it is true. *[Aside.]* Lucetta, run up to Buckle, and take him with you to search where ever you can. *[Exit Lucetta.]*

Now, Mr Frankly, I have found you.—You have used me so ill, that you force me to forget you are my friend.

Frank. What do you mean?

Bel. Draw.

Frank. Are you mad? By Heavens, I am innocent.

Bel. I have heard you, and will no longer be imposed on.—Defend yourself.

Frank. Nay, if you are so hot, I draw to defend myself, as I would against a madman.

Enter RANGER.

Ran. What the devil, swords at noonday! Have among you, faith! *[Parts them.]* What's here? Bellamy?

Yes, gad, you are Bellamy, and you are Frankly. Put up, put up both of you—or else—I am a devilish fellow when once my sword is out.

Bel. We shall have a time——

Ran. *pushing Bellamy one way.* A time for what?

Frank. I shall always be as ready to defend my innocence as now.

Ran. *pushing Frankly i' other way.* Innocence! ay, to be sure—at your age—A mighty innocent fellow, no doubt: But what in the name of Commonsense is it that ails you both? Are you mad? The last time I saw you, you were hugging and kissing: and now you are cutting one another's throats.—I never knew any good come of one fellow's beslavering another.—But I shall put you into better humour; I warrant you.—Bellamy, Frankly, listen both of you—Such fortune!—Such a scheme!——

Bel. Pr'ythee, leave fooling. What, art drunk?

Frank. He is always so, I think.

Ran. And who gave you the privilege of thinking? Drunk? no! I am not drunk—Tipty, perhaps, with my good fortune—merry and in spirits—though I have

not fire enough to run my friend thro' the body. Not drunk, though Jack Meggot and I have box'd it about ~~Champaign~~ Champaign was the word for two whole hours by Shrewsbury clock.

Bel. Jack Meggot?—Why, I left him at one going to bed.

Ran. That may be, but I made a shift to rouse him and his family, by four this morning. Ounds! I pick'd up a wench, and carried her to his house.

Bel. Ha!

Ran. Such a variety of adventures—Nay, you shall hear—But before I begin, Bellamy, you shall promise me half a dozen kisses beforehand; for the devil fetch me if that little jade Jacintha would give me one, tho' I pressed hard.

Bel. Who, Jacintha? Prefs to kiss Jacintha?

Ran. Kifs her! ay! why not? Is she not a woman, and made to be kifs'd?

Bel. Kifs her!—I shall run distracted!

Ran. How could I help it, when I had her alone, you rogue, in her bedchamber at midnight! If I had been to be sacrificed, I should have done it.

Bel. Bedchamber, at midnight! I can hold no longer.

Draw.

Frank. Be easy, Bellamy.

[Interposing.]

Bel. He has been at some of his damn'd tricks with her.

Frank. Hear him out.

Ran. 'Sdeath, how could I know she was his mistress? But I tell this story but miserably. I should have told you first, I was in another lady's chamber. By the Lord, I got in at the window by a ladder of ropes.

Frank. Ha! another lady?

Ran. Another: and stole in upon her, whilst she was undressing; beautiful as an angel, blooming and young—

Frank. What, in the same house?

Bel. What is this to Jacintha? Ease me of my pain.

Ran. Ay, ay, in the same house, on the same floor.

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The sweetest little angel—but I design to have another touch with her.

Frank. Steath! but you shall have a touch with me first.

Bel. Stay, Frankly.

Ran. Why, what strange madness has possess'd you both, that nobody must kiss a pretty wench but yourselves?

Bel. What became of Jacintha?

Ran. Ounds! what have you done that you must monopolize kissing?

Frank. Pr'ythee, honest Ranger, ease me of the pain I am in. Was her name Clarinda?

Bel. Speak in plain words, where Jacintha is, where to be found——Dear boy, tell me.

Ran. Ay, now it is honest Ranger, and dear boy, tell me—and a minute ago my throat was to be cut—I could find in my heart not to open my lips. But here comes Jack Meggot, who will let you all into the secret, though he design'd to keep it from you, in half the time that I can, though I had ever so great a mind to tell it you.

Enter JACK MEGGOT.

J. Meg. So, save ye, save ye, Lads! We have been frightened out of our wits for you: not hearing of Mr Bellamy, poor Jacintha is ready to sink for fear of any accident.

Bel. Is she at your house?

J. Meg. Why, did not you know that? We dispatch'd Mr Ranger to you three hours ago.

Ran. Ay, plague! but I had business of my own, so I could not come——Hark ye, Frankly, is your girl maid, wife, or widow?

Frank. A maid, I hope.

Ran. The odds are against you, Charles——But mine is married, you rogue, and her husband jealous——The devil is in it, if I do not reap some reward for my last night's service.

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Bel. He has certainly been at Mrs. Strickland herself. But, Frankly, I dare not look on you.

Frank. This one embrace cancels all thoughts of enmity.

Bel. Thou generous man!—But I must haste to ease Jacintha of her fears. *[Exit.]*

Frank. And I to make up matters with Clarinda. *[Exit.]*

Ren. And I to some kind wench of other, Jack. But where I shall find her, Heaven knows. And so, my service to your monkey.

Mr. Mag. Adieu, Ratleplate. *[Exit.]*

S C E N E II.

The Hall of Mr. Strickland's House.

Enter Mrs. STRICKLAND and CLARINDA.

Mrs. Strick. But, why in such a hurry, my dear? stay till your servants can go along with you.

Clar. Oh, no matter! they'll follow with my things. It is but a little way off, and my chair will guard me. After my staying out so late last night, I am sure Mr. Strickland will think every minute an age whilst I am in his house.

Mrs. Strick. I am as much amaz'd at his suspecting your innocence as my own; and every time I think of it, I blush at my present behaviour to you.

Clar. No ceremony, dear child.

Mrs. Strick. No, Clarinda, I am too well acquainted with your good humour. But I fear, in the eye of a malicious world, it may look like a confirmation of his suspicion.

Clar. My dear, if the world will speak ill of me, for the little innocent gaiety which I think the peculiar happiness of my temper, I know no way to prevent it; and am only sorry the world is so ill natur'd; but I shall not part with my mirth, I assure them, so long as I know it innocent. I wish, my dear, this may be the greatest uneasiness your husband's jealousy ever gives you.

[Exit.]

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Mrs. Strick. I hope he never again may have such occasion as he had last night.

Clar. You are so unfashionable a wife; — why, last night's accident would have made half the wives in London easy for life. Has not his jealousy discover'd itself openly; and are not you innocent? There is nothing but your foolish temper that prevents his being absolutely in your power.

Mrs. Strick. Clarinda, this is too serious an affair to laugh at. Let me advise you, take care of Mr Frankly, observe his temper well; and if he has the least taint of jealousy, cast him off, and never trust to keeping him in your power.

Clar. You will hear little more of Frankly, I believe. Here is Mr Strickland.

Enter Mr. STRICTLAND and LUCETTA.

Strick. Lucetta says you want me, Madam.

Clar. I trouble you, Sir, only that I might return you thanks for the civilities I have receiv'd in your family, before I took my leave.

Strick. Keep them to yourself, dear Madam. As it is at my request that you leave my house, your thanks upon that occasion are not very desir'd.

Clar. Oh, Sir, you need not fear. My thanks were only for your civilities. They will not overburden you. But I'll conform to your humour, Sir, and part with a little ceremony. —

Strick. As we met.

Clar. The brute! [*Aside.*] My Dear, good bye; we may meet again. [*To Mrs. Strickland.*

Strick. If you dare trust me with your hand.

Clar. Lucetta, remember my instructions. Now, Sir, have with you. [*Mr. Strickland leads Clarinda out.*

Mrs. Strick. Are her instructions cruel or kind, Lucetta? for I suppose they relate to Mr Frankly.

Luc. Have you a mind to try if I can keep a secret as well as yourself, Madam. But I will shew you I am fit to be trusted by keeping this, though it signifies nothing.

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Strict. This answer is not so civil, I think.

Luc. I beg pardon, Madam. I meant it not to offend.

Mrs Strict. Pray let us have no more such. I neither desire, nor want your assistance.

Re-enter Mr STRICTLAND.

Strict. She is gone, I feel myself somewhat easier already. Since I have begun the day with gallantry, Madam, shall I conduct you up?

Mrs Strict. There is something, Sir, which gives you secret uneasiness. I wish—

Strict. Perhaps so, Madam, and perhaps it may soon be no secret at all. *[Leads her out.]*

Luc. Would I were once well settled with my young lady; for at present, this is but an odd sort of a queer family. Last night's affair puzzles me. A hat there was, that belong'd to none of us, that's certain. Madam was in a fright, that is as certain; and I brought all off. Jacintha's escap'd, no one of us knows how. The good man's jealousy was yesterday groundless; yet to-day, in my mind, he is very much in the right. Mighty odd all this! Somebody knocks. If this should be Clarinda's spark, I have an odd message for him too. *[She opens the door.]*

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. So, my pretty handmaid! meeting with you gives me some hopes. May I speak with Clarinda?

Luc. Whom do you want, Sir?

Frank. Clarinda, child. The young lady I was admitted to yesterday.

Luc. Clarinda!—No such person lives here, I assure you.

Frank. Where then?

Luc. I don't know, indeed, Sir.

Frank. Will you enquire within?

Luc. Nobody knows in this house, Sir, you will find.

Frank. What do you mean? She is a friend of Jacintha's, your lady. I will take my oath she was here.

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last night; and you yourself spoke of her being here this morning.—Not know!

Luc. No: none of us know. She went away of a sudden—no one of us can imagine whither.

Frank. Why, faith, child, thou hast a tolerable face, and hast deliver'd this denial very handsomely. But let me tell you, your impertinence this morning had lik'd to have cost me my life. Now, therefore, make me amends. I come from your young mistress. I come from Mr. Bellamy. I come with my purse full of gold (that persuasive rhetoric), to win you to let me see and speak to this Clarinda once again.

Luc. She is not here, Sir.

Frank. Direct me to her.

Luc. No. I can't do that neither.

Enter Mr. STRICTLAND behind.

Strick. I heard a knocking at the door, and a man's voice.—Ha! ——— [Aside.]

Frank. Deliver this letter to her.

Strick. By all my fears, a letter! [Aside.]

Luc. I don't know but I may be tempted to do that.

Frank. Take it then—and with it this.

[Kisses her, and gives her money.]

Strick. Um! there are two bribes in a breath! What a jade she is! [Aside.]

Luc. Ay—this gentleman understands reason.

Frank. And be assured you oblige your mistress while you are serving me.

Strick. Her mistress!—Damn'd sex! and damn'd wife, thou art an epitome of that sex! [Aside.]

Frank. And if you can procure me an answer, your fee shall be enlarg'd. [Exit Frank.]

Luc. The next step is to get her to read this letter.

Strick. snatches the letter.] No, noise—But stand silent there, whilst I read this.

[Breaks it open, and drops the case.]

“Madam, the gaiety of a heart happy as mine was yesterday, may, I hope, easily excuse the unseason-

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"able visit I made your house last night."——Death and the devil! confusion! I shall run distracted. It is too much! There was a man then to whom the hat belong'd; and I was gull'd, abused, cheated, impos'd on by a chit, a girl?——Oh, woman, woman!——But I will be calm, search it coolly to the bottom, and have a full revenge——

Luc. aside.] So here's fine work! He'll make himself very ridiculous though.

Strick. reads on.] "I know my innocence will appear so manifestly that I need only appeal to the Lady who accompanied you at Bath." Your very humble servant, good, innocent, fine Madam Clarinda.—"And I do not doubt but her good nature"—(Bawd, bawd!)—"will not let you persist in injuring your obedient humble servant," CHARLES FRANKLY."

—Now, who can say my jealousy lack'd foundation, or my suspicion of fine Madam's innocent gaiety was unjust?——Gaiety! why, ay! 'twas gaiety brought him hither. Gaiety makes her a bawd—My wife may be a whore in gaiety. What a number of sins become fashionable under the notion of gaiety!——What! you receiv'd this epistle in gaiety too! and were to deliver it to my wife, I suppose, when the gay fit came next upon her.—Why, you impudent young strumpet, do you laugh at me?

Luc. I wou'd, if I dar'd, and heartily.—Be pleas'd, Sir, only to look at that piece of paper that lyes there.

Strick. Ha!

Luc. I have not touched it, Sir. It is the case that letter came in, and the direction will inform you whom I was to deliver it to.

Strick. This is directed to Clarinda!

Luc. Oh, is it so? Now read it over again, and all your foolish doubts will vanish.

Strick. I have no doubts at all. I am satisfied that you, Jacintha, Clarinda, my wife, all are——

Luc. Lud, lud! you would make a body mad.

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Striff. Hold your impertinent tongue.

Luc. You'll find the thing to be just as I say, Sir.

Striff. Be gone. [*Exit Lucetta.*] They must be poor at the work, indeed, if they did not lend one another their names. 'Tis plain, 'tis evident: and I am miserable. But for my wife, she shall not stay one night longer in my house. Separation, shame, contempt shall be her portion. I am determin'd in the thing; and when once it is over, I may perhaps be easy. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E III.

The Street.

CLARINDA brought in a chair, RANGER following.

Ran. Hark ye, chairman? Damn your confounded trot. Go slower.

Clar. Here, stop.

Ran. By Heavens! the monsters hear reason, and obey.

Clar. [*letting down the window.*] What troublesome fellow was that?

Chair. Some rake, I warrant, that cannot carry himself home, and wants us to do it for him.

Clar. There—And pray do you take care I be not troubled with him. [*Goes in.*]

Ran. That's as much as to say now, Pray follow me. Madam, you are a charming woman, and I will do it—

Chair. Stand off, Sir.

Ran. Prithee, honest fellow—what—what writing is that? [*Endavouring to get in.*]

Chair. You come not here.

Ran. Lodgings to be let! A pretty convenient inscription, and the sign of a good modest family! There may be lodgings for gentlemen as well as ladies. Hark ye, rogues, I'll lay you all the silver I have in my pocket, there it is, I get in there in spite of your teeth, ye pimps. [*Throws down money, and goes in.*]

1 *Chair.* What, have you let the gentleman in?

2 *Chair.* I'll tell you what, partner, he certainly slipped by whilst we were picking up the money. Come, take up. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE IV.

Clarinda's Lodgings.

A noise between RANGER and LANDLADY.

CLARINDA enters laughing, a MAID following.

Clar. My madcap Cousin Ranger, as I live. I am sure he does not know me.—If I cou'd but hide my face now, what sport I shou'd have! A mask, a mask! run, and see if you can find a mask.

Maid. I believe there is one above.

Clar. Run, and fetch it. *[Exit Maid.]*
Here he comes.

Enter RANGER and LANDLADY.

How unlucky this is! *[Turning from 'em.]*

Land. What's your business here, unmannerly Sir?

Ran. Well, let's see these lodgings that are to be let.—Gad, a very pretty neat tenement—But harkye, is it real and natural all that, or only patch'd up and new-painted this summer season, against the town fills?

Land. What does the saucy fellow mean with his double tenders here? Get you down—

Enter MAID with a mask.

Maid. Here is a very dirty one. *[Aside to Clar.]*

Clar. No matter—Now we shall see a little what he wou'd be at. *[Aside.]*

Land. This is an honest house—For all your lac'd waistcoat I'll have you thrown down neck and heels.

Ran. Pooh! not in such a hurry, good old Lady—A mask!—Nay, with all my heart. It saves a world of blushing.—Have you ne'er a one for me?—I am apt to be aham'd myself on these occasions.

Land. Get down, I say—

Ran. Not, if I guess right, old Lady. Madam, [*To Clarinda, who makes signs to the Landlady to retire.*] Look ye there now ! that a woman shou'd live to your age, and know so little of the matter. Be gone. [*Exit Landlady.*] By her forwardness this should be a whore of quality. My boy Ranger, thou art in luck to-day.—She won't speak, I find—then I will. [*Aside.*] Delicate lodgings truly, Madam ; and very neatly furnished.—A very convenient room this, I must needs own, to entertain a mix'd company. But, my dear charming creature, does not that door open to a more commodious apartment, for the happiness of a private friend, or so? The prettiest brass lock.—Fast, um; that won't do. 'Sdeath, you are a beautiful woman, I am sure you are. Prithce let me see your face. It is your interest, child. The longer you delay, the more I shall expect ; therefore, [*Taking her hand.*] my dear, soft, kind, new acquaintance, thus let me take your hand ; and whilst you gently, with the other, let day-light in upon me, let me softly hold you to me, that with my longing lips I may receive the warmest, best impression. [*She unmasks.*] Clarinda!

Clar. Ha, ha! Your servant, Cousin Ranger—
Ha, ha, ha!

Ran. Oh, your humble servant, Madam! you had liked to have been beholden to your mask, Cousin.

Clar. Ha, ha, ha! You were not so happy in your disguise, Sir. The pretty stagger in your gait, that happy disposition of your wig, the genteel negligence of your whole person, and those pretty flowers of modish gallantry made it impossible to mistake you, my sweet Cuz. Ha, ha!

Ran. Oh, I knew you too ; but I fancied you had taken a particular liking to my person, and had a mind to sink the relation under that little piece of black velvet ! And, egad, you never find me behind you in a frolic. But, since it is otherwise, my merry good-humour'd cousin, I am as heartily glad to see you in town as I should be to meet any of my old bottle acquaintance.

Clar. And on my side I am as happy in meeting your Worship as I should be in a rencounter with e'er a petticoat in Christendom.

Ran. And if you have any occasion for a dangling gallant to Vauxhall, Ranelagh, or even the poor neglected Park, you are so unlike the rest of your virtuous sisters of the petticoat, that I will venture myself with you.

Clar. Take care what you promise; for who knows but this face you were pleased to say so many pretty things of before you saw it, may raise so many rivals among your kept mistresses, and reps of quality—

Ran. Hold, hold! a truce with your satire, sweet Cuz; or if scandal must be the topic of every virtuous woman's conversation—call for your tea water, and let it be in its proper element. Come, your tea, your tea.

Enter LANDLADY.

Clar. With all my heart—Who's there? get tea—upon condition that you stay till it comes.

Ran. That is according as you behave, Madam.

Clar. Oh, Sir, I am very sensible of the favour.

Ran. Nay, you may, I assure you; for there is but one woman of virtue besides yourself I would stay with ten minutes, (and I have not known her above these twelve hours.) The insipidity or the rancour of their discourse is insufferable. 'Sdeath! I had rather take the air with my grandmother.

Clar. Ha, ha, ha! the ladies are highly oblig'd to you, I vow.

Ran. I tell you what. The lady I speak of was oblig'd to me, and the generous girl is ready to own it.

Clar. And pray, when was it you did Virtue this considerable service?

Ran. But this last night, the devil fetch me! A romantic whim of mine convey'd me into her chamber, where I found her young and beautiful, alone at midnight, dress'd like a soft Adonis, her lovely hair all loose about her shoulders—

Clar. In boys cloaths! This is worth attending to. [*Aside.*]

Ran. Gad, I no more suspected her being a woman, than I did your being my carer-cousin.

Clar. How did you discover it at last?

Ran. Why, faith, she very modestly dropt me a hint of it herself.

Clar. Herself! If this should be Jacintha? [*Aside.*]

Ran. Ay, 'foregad, did she! which I imagined a good sign at midnight. Ha, Cousin! So I e'en invented a long story of a passion I had for her, (though I had never seen her before)—You know my old way—and said so many such tender things——

Clar. As you said to me just now.

Ran. 'Plhaw! quite in another style, I assure you. It was midnight, and I was in the right cue.

Clar. Well! and what did she answer to all these protestations?

Ran. Why, instead of running into my arms at once, as I expected——

Clar. To be sure.

Ran. 'Gad, like a free-hearted honest girl, she frankly told me, she liked another better than she liked me: that I had something in my face that shewed I was a gentleman; and she would e'en trust herself with me, if I would give her my word I would convey her to her spark.

Clar. Oh, brave! And how did you bear this?

Ran. Why, curse me if I am ever angry with a woman for not having a passion for me; I only hate your sex's vain pretence of having no passion at all. 'Gad! I loved the good-natur'd girl for it; took her at her word; stole her out of the window; and this morning made a very honest fellow happy in the possession of her.

Clar. And her name is Jacintha?

Ran. Ha!

Clar. Your amours are no secrets, Sir. You see you might as well have told me all, the whole of last night's adventure; for you find I know.

Ran. All! Why, what do you know?

Clar. Nay, nothing. I only know that a gentleman's hat cannot drop in a lady's chamber——

Ran. The devil!

Clar. But a husband is such an odd, impertinent, awkward creature, that he will be stumbling over it.

Ran. Here has been fine work! [*Aside.*] But how, in the name of wonder, should you know all this?

Clar. By being in the same house.

Ran. In the same house!

Clar. Ay, in the same house. A witness of the confusion you have made.

Ran. Frankly's Clarinda, by all that's fortunate! It must be so. [*Aside.*]

Clar. And let me tell you, Sir, that even the dull, slow-spirited diversions you ridicule in us tame creatures, are preferable to the romantic exploits that only wine can raise you to.

Ran. Yes, Cousin! But I'll be even with you. [*Aside.*]

Clar. If you reflect, Cousin, you will find a great deal of wit in shocking a lady's modesty, disturbing her quiet, tainting her reputation, and ruining the peace of a whole family.

Ran. To be sure.

Clar. These are the high-metal'd pleasures of your men of spirit, that the insipidity of the virtuous can never arrive at. And can you in reality think your Burgundy and your Bacchus, your Venus and your Loves, an excuse for all this? Fy, Cousin, fy!

Ran. No, Cousin.

Clar. What, dumb? I am glad you have modesty enough left not to go about to excuse yourself.

Ran. It is as you say. When we are sober, and reflect but ever so little on the follies we commit, we are ashamed and sorry; and yet the very next minute we run again into the very same absurdities.

Clar. What? moralizing, Cousin! Ha, ha, ha!

Ran. What you know is not half, nor a hundredth part of the mischief of my last night's frolic: and yet

the very next petticoat I saw this morning I must follow it, and be damn'd to me; though, for ought I know, poor Frankly's life may depend upon it.

Clar. Whose life, Sir?

Ran. And here do I stand prattling to you now?

Clar. Pray, good Cousin, explain yourself.

Ran. Good Cousin! She has it. [*Aside.*] Why, whilst I was making off with the wench, Bellamy and he were quarrelling about her; and though Jacintha and I made all the haste we could, we did not get to them before—

Clar. Before what? (I'm frighten'd out of my wits.)

Ran. Not that Frankly car'd three halfpence for the girl.

Clar. But there was no mischief done, I hope.

Ran. Pho! a slight scratch. Nothing at all, as the surgeon said; though he was but a queer-looking son of a bitch of a surgeon neither.

Clar. Good God! Why, he should have the best that can be found in London.

Ran. Ay, indeed, so he should. That was what I was going for when I saw you. [*Sits down.*] They are all at Jack Meggot's hard by, and you will keep me here.

Clar. I keep you here! For Heaven's sake be gone.

Ran. Your tea is a damn'd while a coming.

Clar. You shall have no tea now, I assure you.

Ran. Nay! one dish.

Clar. No, positively, you shall not stay.

Ran. Your commands are absolute, Madam. [*Going.*

Clar. Then Frankly is true, and I only am to blame.

Ran. returns.] But I beg ten thousand pardons, Cousin, that I should forget to salute you.

Clar. Pshaw! How can you trifle at such a time as this?

Ran. A trifle! Wrong not your beauty.

Clar. Lord! how teasing you are! There.

Ran. kisses her.] Poor thing! how uneasy she is! Nay, no ceremony. You shall not stir a step with me.

Clar. I do not intend it. This is downright provoking. [*Exit Ranger.*] Who's there?

Enter LANDLADY.

Land. Madam, did your Ladyship call?

Clar. Does one Mr Meggot live in this neighbourhood?

Land. Yes, Madam, a fine gentleman, and keeps a noble house, and a world of company.

Clar. Very well. I don't want his history. I wonder my servants are not come yet.

Land. Lack-a-day, Madam, they are all below.

Clar. Send up one then with a card to me. I must know the truth of this affair immediately. *[Exit.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Room in Mr Strictland's house.

Mr and Mrs STRICTLAND discover'd; she weeping, and he writing at a table.

Mrs STRICTLAND.

HIGH, ho!

Strick. What can possibly be the occasion of that sigh, Madam? You have yourself agreed to a maintenance, and a maintenance no duchess need be ashamed of.

Mrs Strick. But the extremities of provocation that drove me to that argument——

Strick. Were the effect of your own follies. Why do you disturb me? *[Writes on.*

Mrs Strick. I would not willingly give you a moment's uneasiness. I desire but a fair and equal hearing; and if I satisfy you not in every point, then abandon me, discard me to the world, and its malicious tongues.

Strick. What was it you said?——Damn this pen.

Mrs Strick. I say, Mr Strictland, I would only——

Strick. You would only!——You would only repeat what you have been saying this hour, *I am innocent;* and when I shewed you the letter I had taken from

your maid, what was then your poor evasion but that it was to Clarinda, and you was innocent?

Mrs Strick. Heaven knows I am innocent.

Strick. But I know your Clarinda, your woman of honour, is your blind, your cover, your——But why do I distract myself about a woman I have no longer any concerns with? here, Madam, is your fate. A letter to your brother in the country.

Mrs Strick. Sir——

Strick. I have told him what a sister he is to receive, and how to bid her welcome.

Mrs Strick. Then my ruin is complete. My brother!

Strick. I must vindicate my own honour. Else what will the world say?

Mrs Strick. That brother was my only hope, my only ground of patience. In his retirement I hoped my name might have been safe, and slept, till by some happy means you might at length have known me innocent, and pitied me.

Strick. Retirement! pretty soul! No! No! That face was never made for retirement. It is another sort of retiring you are fittest for——Ha! hark! what's that? [*A knocking at the door.*] Two gentle taps——And why but two! Was that the signal, Madam? Stir not on your life.

Mrs Strick. Give me resolution, Heaven, to bear this usage, and keep it secret from the world. [*Aside.*]

Strick. I will have no signs, no items. No hem to tell him I am here. Ha! another tap. The gentleman is in haste, I find. [*Opens the door.*]

Enter TESTER.

Tester! why did you not come in, rascal? [*Beats him.*] All vexations meet to cross me.

Test. Lard, Sir, what do you strike me for? My mistress order'd me never to come in where she was without knocking at the door.

Strick. Oh, cunning devil! Tester is too honest to be trusted.

Mrs Strick. Unhappy man! will nothing undeceive him? [*Aside.*]

Test. Sir, here is a letter.

Strick. To my wife?

Test. No, Sir, to you. The servant waits below.

Strick. Art sure it is a servant?

Test. Sir! [*Staring.*] It is Mr Buckle, Sir.

Strick. I am mad: I know not what to say, or do, or think. But let's read.

Reads to himself.

"Sir, We cannot bear to reflect that Mrs Strickland
"may possibly be ruin'd in your esteem, and in the voice
"of the world, only by the confusion which our affairs
"has made in your family, without offering all within
"our power to clear the misunderstanding between
"you. If you will give yourself the trouble but to
"step to Mr Meggot's, where all the parties will be,
"we doubt not but we can entirely satisfy your most
"flagrant suspicion, to the honour of Mrs Strickland,
"and the quiet of your lives.

"JACINTHA, JOHN BELLAMY."

Hey; here is the whole gang witnessing for one another. They think I am an ass, and will be led by the nose to believe every thing. Call me a chair. [*Exit Tester.*] Yes, I will go to this rendezvous of enemies—I will—and find out all her plots, her artifices and contrivances: it will clear my conduct to her brother, and all her friends. [*Exit Strickland.*]

Mrs Strick. Gone so abruptly! what can that letter be about? No matter: there is no way left to make us easy but by my disgrace, and I must learn to suffer. Time and innocence will teach me to bear it patiently.

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Mrs Bellamy, Madam (for my young lady is married) begs you would follow Mr Strickland to Mr Meggot's; she makes no doubt but she shall be able to make you and my master easy.

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Mrs Strick. But how came she to know any thing of the matter?

Luc. I have been with them, Madam; I could not bear to see so good a lady so ill treated.

Mrs Strick. I am indeed, Lucetta, ill treated; but I hope this day will be the last of it.

Luc. Madam Clarinda and Mr Frankly will be there: and the young gentleman, Madam, who was with you in this room last night.

Mrs Strick. Ha! if he is there, there may be hopes; and it is worth the trying.

Luc. Dear Lady—let me call a chair.

Mrs Strick. I go with you. I cannot be more wretched than I am. [Exit.

S C E N E II.

A Room in Meggot's House.

Enter FRANKLY, RANGER, BELLAMY, JACINTHA, and MEGGOT.

Frank. Oh, Ranger! this is news indeed! Your cousin, and a lady of such fortune!

Ran. I have done the business for you. I tell you she's your own. She loves you.

Frank. Words are too faint to tell the joy I feel.

Ran. I have put that heart of hers into such a flutter, that I'll lay a hundred guineas, with the assistance which this lady has promis'd me, I fix her yours directly.

Jac. Ay, ay, Mr Frankly, we have a design upon her which cannot fail. But you must obey orders.

Frank. Most willingly. But remember, dear Lady, I have more than life at stake.

Jac. Away then into the next room; for she is this instant coming hither.

Frank. Hither? You surprize me more and more.

Jac. Here is a message from her by which she desires leave to wait on me this afternoon.

Ran. Only for the chance of seeing you here, I assure ye.

Frank. Let me hug thee, though I know not how to believe it.

Ran. Psha! prythee do not flite me! It is a busy day, a very busy day.

J. Meg. Thou art the most unaccountable creature in life.

Ran. But the most lucky one, Jack, if I succeed for Frankly, as I have for Bellamy; and my heart whispers me I shall. Come in, most noble Mr Buckle: and what have you to propose?

Enter BUCKLE.

Buck. A Lady, Madam, in a chair says her name is Clarinda.

Jac. Desire her to walk up.

Bel. How could you let her wait? [*Exit Buckle.*] You must excuse him, Madam. Buckle is a true bachelor's servant, and knows no manners.

Jac. Away, away, Mr Frankly, and stay till I call you. A rap with my fan shall be the signal. [*Exit Frankly.*] We make very free with your house, Mr Meggot.

J. Meg. Oh! you could not oblige me more.

Enter CLARINDA.

Clar. Dear Mrs Bellamy, pity my confusion. I am to wish you joy, and ask you pardon all in a breath. I know not what to say. I am quite ashamed of my last night's behaviour.

Jac. Come, come, Clarinda, it is all well. All is over and forgot. Mr Bellamy—— [*Salute.*]

Clar. I wish you joy, Sir, with all my heart, and should have been very sorry if any folly of mine had prevented it.

Bel. Madam, I am oblig'd to you.

Clar. [*Aside.*] I see nothing of Mr Frankly! My heart misgives me.

Ran. And so you came hither purely out of friendship, good-nature and humility?

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Clar. Purely.

Ran. To confess your offences, to beg pardon, and to make reparation?

Clar. Purely. Is this any thing so extraordinary?

J. Mag. The most so of any thing in life, I think.

Ran. A very whimsical business for so fine a lady, and an errand you seldom went on before, I fancy, my dear cousin.

Jac. Never, I dare swear, if I may judge by the awkward concern she shews in delivering it.

Clar. Concern? Lard! well! I protest you are all exceeding pretty company! Being settled for life, Jacintha, gives an ease to the mind, that brightens conversation strangely.

Jac. I am sorry, with all my heart, you are not in the same condition; for, as you are, my dear, you are horridly *chagriné*.

Ran. But with a little of our help, Madam, the ladg may recover, and be very good company.

Clar. Hum! what does he mean, Mr Bellamy?

Bell. Ask him, Madam.

Clar. Indeed I shall not give myself the trouble.

Jac. Then you know what he means.

Clar. Something impertinent, I suppose, not worth explaining.

Jac. It is something you won't let him explain, I find.

Enter a SERVANT, and whispers Meggot.

J. Mag. Very well; desire him to walk into the parlour. Madam, the gentleman is below.

Jac. Then every one to your post. You know your cues.

Ran. I warrant ye. *[Exit Gentlemen.]*

Clar. All gone? I am glad of it, for I want to speak to you.

Jac. And I, my dear Clarinda, have something which I do not know how to tell you. But it must be known, sooner or later.

Clar. What's the matter?

THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. ACT V.

Jac. Poor Mr. Frankly——

Clar. How frightful out of my senses!

Jac. Has no wounds but what you can cure. Ha, ha, ha!

Clar. 'Pshaw! I'm angry, but I should be rather on my side.

Jac. 'Pshaw! you are pleas'd——And will be more so when I tell you, this man, whom Fortune has thrown in your way, is in rank and temper the man in the world who suits you best for a husband.

Clar. Husband, I say, husband, indeed! where will this end bring us? not going to being a wife. [Aside.

Jac. His very soul is yours, and he only waits an opportunity of selling you so. He is in the next room. Shall I call him in?

Clar. My dear girl, hold!

Jac. How foolish is this coyness now, Clarinda? If the men were here indeed, something might be said——And so, Mr. Frankly——

Clar. How can you be so teasing?

Jac. Nay, I am in downright earnest: and to shew you how particular I have been in my enquiries, though I know you have a spirit above regarding the modish, paltry way of a Smithfield bargain——his fortune——

Clar. I don't care what his fortune is.

Jac. Don't you so? then you are farther gone than I thought you were.

Clar. No, 'psaw; prythee, I don't mean so neither.

Jac. I don't care what you mean: but you won't like him the worse, I hope, for having a fortune superior to your own. Now shall I call him in?

Clar. Pho, dear girl——some other time.

Jac. [Kicks with her fan.] That's the signal, and here he is. You shall not stir: I positively will leave you together.

Clar. I tremble all over.

Frank. [Enter FRANKLY.] But it is your having so luckily met with a common friend in Mrs Bellamy——

ACT IV. THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

Clar. Sir!

Frank. Makes any farther apology for my behaviour last night, absolutely unnecessary.

Clar. So far, Mr Frankly, that I think the apology should be rather on my side, for the impertinent bluster I made about her.

Frank. This behaviour gives me hopes, I Madam, pardon the construction. But from the little bustle you made about the lady, may I not hope you was not quite indifferent about the gentleman?

Clar. Have a care of being too sanguine in your hopes: might not a love of power, or the satisfaction of shewing that power, or the dear pleasure of abusing that power; might not these have been foundation enough for more than what I did?

Frank. Charming woman!—With most of your sex I grant they might, but not with you: whatever power your beauty gives, your good nature will allow you no other use of it, than to oblige.

Clar. This is the height of compliment, Mr Frankly.

Frank. Not in my opinion, I assure you, Madam: and I am now going to put it to the trial.

Clar. *aside.* What is he going to say now?

Frank. *aside.* What is it that ails me, that I cannot speak? What he here!

Enter RANGER.

Clar. Interrupted! Impertinent!

Ran. There is no fight so ridiculous as a pair of your true lovers. Here are you two now, bowing and cringing, and keeping a passion secret from one another that is no secret to all the house beside. And if you don't make the matter up immediately, it will be all over the town within these two hours.

Clar. What do you mean?

Frank. Ranger—

Ran. Do you be quiet, can't you? [*Aside.*] But it is over, I suppose, Cousin, and you have given him your consent.

THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

Clar. Sir, the liberties you are pleased to take with me—

Ran. Oh, in your ears, will you? Why, then, Mr Frankly, there is a certain letter of yours, Sir, to my lady—

Clar. A letter to me?—

Ran. Yes, to you, Madam.

Frank. Ha, what of that letter?

Ran. It is only fallen into Mr Strickland's hands, that is all; and he has read it.

Frank. Read it!

Ran. Ay, read it to all his family at home, and to all the company below; and if some stop be not put to it, it will be read in all the coffeehouses in town.

Frank. A stop! This sword shall put a stop to it, or I will perish in the attempt.

Ran. But will that sword put a stop to the talk of the town?—Only make it talk the faster, take my word for it.

Clar. This is all a trick.

Ran. Is it so? you shall soon see that, my fine cousin.

Frank. It is but too true, I fear. There is such a letter which I gave Lacerta. Can you forgive me? Was I much to blame, when I could neither see, nor hear of you?

Clar. tenderly. You give yourself, Mr Frankly, a thousand more uneasinesses than you need about me.

Frank. If this uneasiness but convinces you how much I love you—Interrupted again!

Clar. aside. This is downright malice.

Enter RANGER, followed by JACINTHA, Mr STRICKLAND, BELLAMY, and MEGGOT.

Ran. Enter, enter, Gentleman and Lady.

Clar. Mr Strickland here! what is all this?

Ran. Now you shall see whether this is a trick or no.

Yac. Do not be uneasy, my dear; we will explain it to you.

Act V. The SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. 77

Frank. I cannot bear this trifling, Ranger, when my heart is on the rack.

Ran. Come this way then, and learn.

[*Jacintha, Clarinda, Frankly, and Ranger retire. Mr Strickland, Bellamy, and Meggot advance.*]

Strick. Why, I know not well what to say. This has a face. This letter may as well agree with Clarinda as with my wife, as you have told the story, and Lucetta explain'd it so. — But she for a suspecting piece would have construd it the other way.

J. Meg. But, Sir, if we produce this Mr Frankly to you, and he owns himself the author of this letter.

Bel. And if Clarinda likewise be brought before your face to encourage his addressee, there can be no farther room for doubt.

Strick. No—Let that appear, and I shall—I think I shall be satisfied—But yet it cannot be.

Bel. Why not? hear me, Sir. [They talk.]

[*Jacintha, Clarinda, Frankly, and Ranger, advance.*]

Jac. In short, Clarinda, unless the affair is made up directly; a separation, with all the obloquy on her side, must be the consequence.

Clar. Poor Mrs Strickland, I pity her; but for him, he deserves all he feels were it ten times what it is.

Jac. It is for her sake only that we beg of you both to bear his impertinence.

Clar. With all my heart. You will do what you please with me.

Frank. Generous creature!

Strick. Ha! here she is, and with her the very man I saw deliver the letter to Lucetta—I do begin to fear I have made myself a fool—Now for the proof—Here is a letter, Sir, which has given me great disturbance, and these gentlemen assure me it was writ by you.

Frank. That letter, Sir, upon my honour I left this morning with Lucetta, for this lady.

Strick. For that lady! and, Frankly, the name at the bottom, is not feign'd, but your real name?

Frank. Frankly is my name.

38 THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. ACT II.

Strick. I see, I feel myself ridiculous, of him. And now, Mr Strickland, you hope—

Clar. Ay, ay, a clear case, you will say to you.

Strick. I am satisfied, and will go this instant to Mrs Strickland.

Ran. Why then the devil fetch me if this would satisfy me.

Strick. What's that?

Ran. Nay, nothing: it is no affair of mine.

Bel. What do you mean, Ranger?

Strick. Ay, what do you mean? I will know before I stir.

Ran. With all my heart, Sir. Cannot you see that all this may be a concerted matter between them?

Frank. Ranger, you know I can resent.

Strick. Go on—I will defend you, let who will resent it.

Ran. Why then, Sir, I declare myself your friend: and were I as you—nothing but their immediate marriage should convince me.

Strick. Sir, you're right, and are my friend indeed: give me your hand.

Ran. Nay, were I to hear her say, I Clarinda, take thee Charles, I would not believe them till I saw them a-bed together. Now resent it as you will.

Strick. Ay, Sir, as you will. But nothing less shall convince me; and so, my fine Lady, if you are in earnest—

Clar. Sure, Mr Strickland—

Strick. Nay, no flouncing! you cannot escape.

Ran. Why, Frankly, has't no soul?

Frank. I pity her confusion.

Ran. Pity her confusion!—the man's a fool—Here, take her hand—

Frank. Thus on my knees then, let me ravish with your hand, your heart.

Clar. Ravish it you cannot: for it is with all my heart I give it to you.

Strick. I am satisfied.

ACT V. THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

Clar. And so am I, now it once is over.

Ran. And so am I, my dainty Cousin— And I wish you joy of a man your whole sex would go to cuffs for if they knew him but half so well as I do— Ha! she here? this is more than I bargain'd for. *[Aside.]*

JACINTHA leads in Mrs. STRICKLAND.

Strick. embracing *Mrs. Strickland* Madam, reproach me not with my folly, and you shall never hear of it again.

Mrs. Strick. Reproach you? no, if ever you hear the least reflection pass my lips, forsake me in that instant; or, what would yet be worse, suspect again.

Strick. It is enough. I am ashamed to talk to thee— This letter, which I wrote to your brother, thus I rear in pieces, and with it part for ever with my jealousy.

Mrs. Strick. This is a joy indeed! as great as unexpected. Yet there is one thing wanting to make it lasting.

Ran. What the devil is coming now? *[Aside.]*

Mrs. Strick. Be assur'd, every other suspicion of me was as unjust as your last; though perhaps you had more foundation for your fears.

Ran. She won't tell, sure, for her own sake. *[Aside.]*

Mrs. Strick. All must be clear'd before my heart will be at ease.

Ran. It looks plaguy like it, tho'! *[Aside.]*

Strick. What mean you? I am all attention.

Mrs. Strick. There was a man, as you suspected, in my chamber last night.

Strick. Ha! take care, I shall relapse.

Mrs. Strick. That gentleman was he—

Ran. Here is a devil for you! *[Aside.]*

Mrs. Strick. Let him explain the rest.

Ran. A frolick! a mere frolick! on my life.

Strick. A frolick! zounds! *[They Interpose.]*

Ran. Nay, don't let us quarrel the very moment you declar'd yourself my friend. There was no harm done, I promise you. Nay, never frown. After I have told my story, any satisfaction you are pleas'd to ask, I shall be ready to give.

THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. ACT IV.

Strick. Be quick then, and ease me of my pain.

Ran. Why then, as I was strolling about last night, upon the look out, I must confess—Chance, and chance only convey'd me to your house; where I espied a ladder of ropes most invitingly fasten'd to the window.

Jac. Which ladder I had fasten'd for my escape.

Strick. Proceed.

Ran. Up mounted I, and up I should have gone, if it had been in the garret. I open'd one door, then another, and, to my great surprise, the whole house was silent. At last, I stole into a room where this lady was undressing.

Strick. 'Sdeath and the devil! you did not dare, sure—

Ran. I don't know whether I had dar'd or no; if I had not heard the maid say something of her master's being jealous. Oh!—damn me, thought I, then the work is half done to my hands.

Jac. Do you mind that, Mr Strickland?

Strick. I do—I do, most feelingly.

Ran. The maid grew saucy, and most conveniently to my wishes was turn'd out of the room; and if you had not the best wife in the world—

Strick. Ounds! Sir, but what right have you—

Ran. What right, Sir? If you will be jealous of your wife without a cause; if you will be out at that time of night, when you might have been so much better employ'd at home: we young fellows think we have a right—

Strick. No joking, I beseech you. You know not what I feel.

Ran. Then seriously, I was mad or drunk enough, call it which you will, to be very rude to this lady; for which I ask both her pardon and yours! I am an odd sort of a fellow, perhaps: but I am above telling you, or any man, a lie, damn me if I am not.

Strick. I must, I cannot but believe you; and for the future, Madam, you shall find a heart ready to love and trust you. No tears I beg. I cannot bear them.

Mrs Strick. I cannot speak; and yet there is a favour, Sir—

Act V. The SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

Str. I understand you. — And, as a proof of the sincerity with which I speak, I beg it as a favour of this lady, in particular [To Clarinda,] and of all the company in general, to return to my house immediately: where every thing, Mr Bellamy, shall be settled to your entire satisfaction. — No thanks, I have not deserv'd them.

Meg. I beg your pardon, Sir, the fiddles are ready. Mrs Bellamy has promis'd me her hand; and I won't part with one of you till midnight; and if you are as well satisfied as you pretend to be, let our friend Rattle here begin the ball with Mrs. Strickland: for he seems to be the hero of the day.

Str. As you and the company please.

Ran. Why, this is honest. Continue but in this humour, and faith! Sir, you may trust me to run about your house like a spaniel — I cannot sufficiently admire at the whimsicalness of my good fortune, in being so instrumental to this general happiness — Bellamy, Frankly, I wish you joy with all my heart, (though I had rather you should be married than I, for all that.) Never did matrimony appear to me with a smile upon her face, till this instant.

Sure joys for ever wait each happy pair,

When sense the man, and virtue crowns the fair;

And kind compliance proves their mutual care.

[A Dance.]

EPITOLIOGUE

Written by Mr. GARRECK.

Spoken by Mrs. PRITCHARD.

THO' the young smarts, I see, begin to sneer,
And the old sinners cast a wicked leer:
Be not alarm'd, ye fair—You've nought to fear.
No wanton hint, no loose ambiguous sense,
Shall flatter vicious taste at your expence.
Leaving for once these shameless arts in vogue,
We give a Fable for the Epilogue.

An Ass there was, our author bad me say,
Who needs must write—He did—And wrote a play.
The parts were cast to various beasts and fowls;
Their stage a barn;—The manager an owl.
The house was cram'd at six, with friends and foes;
Rakes, wits, and critics, citizens and beaux.
These characters appear'd in different shapes
Of tigers, foxes, horses, bulls, and apes;
With others too, of lower rank and station:
A perfect abstract of the brute creation.
Each, as he felt, mark'd out the author's faults,
And thus the Connoisseurs express'd their thoughts.
The Critic Curs first snarl'd—the rules are broke,
Time, place, and action, sacrific'd to joke.
The Goats cry'd out, 'twas formal, dull, and chaste—
Not writ for beasts of gallantry and taste.
The Horned Cattle were in pitious taking,
At fornication, rapes, and cuckold-making.



E P I L O G U E. 83

The Tigers swore, he wanted fire and passion;
 The Apes condemn'd——because it was the fashion.
 The generous Steeds allow'd him proper merit:
 Here mark'd his faults, and there approv'd his spirit.
 While brother Bards Bray'd forth with usual spleen,
 And as they heard exploded every scene.
 When Reynard's thoughts were ask'd, the strutting sage,
 Fam'd for hypocrisy, and worn with age,
 Condemn'd the shameless licence of the stage.
 At which the monkey shipp'd from box to box,
 And whisper'd round, the judgment of the Fox.
 Abus'd the moderns; talk'd of Rome and Greece;
 Bilk'd ev'ry box-keeper; and damn'd the piece.

Now ev'ry fable has a moral to it——
 Be churchman, statesman, any thing——but poet.
 In law, or physic, quack in what you will;
 Cant and grimace conceal the want of skill:
 Secure in these, his Gravity may pass——
 But here no artifice can bide the As.

END OF VOLUME TENTH

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